Francis Edward Howard
West Bridgewater
Massachusetts
December the
27th
1845

Edith F. Howard

METROPOLITAN EDITION.

I PROMESSI SPOSI;

OR,

THE BETROTHED LOVERS.

A MILANESE STORY OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

AS

TRANSLATED FOR THE METROPOLITAN, FROM THE ITALIAN OF ALESSANDRO MANZONI,

BY G. W. FEATHERSTONHAUGH.

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1834.

THE METROPOLITAN;

A MISCELLANY OF LITERATURE AND SCIENCE.

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

THE Translator of the powerful and beautiful story now presented to the American public, would remark, that whilst he has, in no instance, felt himself at liberty to overlook any of those passages of his author, which some have thought were the blemishes of a work too long for a modern romance, yet he feels that an explanation is owing to his readers, for omitting altogether a version of the "introduzione" which Manzoni has prefixed to his Promessi Sposi.

Following that example of Sir Walter Scott, which has not received the sanction of the critical admirers of that great writer, the Italian novelist, believing that one fiction should be introduced by another, has had recourse to the cumbrous and fatiguing invention, of supposing that his work was written by an anonymous cotemporary of the period of his story: a sort of Italian Clutterbuck, of the 17th century, a rhetorical Secentista, of whose turgid and conceited style he gives an example in the opening of his introduction, and of which the following is a specimen.

"History may be truly defined to be an illustrious war waged against time, where the years which had been made captive, and which had even ceased to exist, are snatched from his hands, recalled to life, and reviewed and arrayed again in order of battle. But the famous champions which in such lists gather harvests of palms and laurels, bear away only the most magnificent and brilliant spoils, embalming with their pens the undertakings of princes, potentates, and high personages, and drawing with the exquisite needle of genius, those threads of gold and silk which form a perpetual embroidery of glorious actions."

This introduction falls so far short of the work itself in both vigor and humor, and the fiction is so superfluous and troublesome, that persons of taste upon hastily running it over, might easily conceive an unfavorable opinion of the rich pages it precedes, and thus by a very natural prejudice, deprive themselves of the rare gratification, of reading a work, which has raised its author to a level even with Cervantes. This has been one reason why the introduction has not been translated, which it would have been, if it had been at all connected with the story, or had possessed any particular merit of its own.

No one can engage in the perusal of this work, without feeling how profoundly Manzoni is acquainted with the springs of human action, some of the most potent of which he has touched with unrivaled skill, in the development of a story singular for its simplicity. A young maiden and her lover, of the mountainous district of the lake Como, born and reared in the humblest walks of life, are, as the title implies, the personages, in the illustration of whose fate and adventures, so many powerful incidents, and characters of such marked originality, have been created. On the eve of the celebration of their humble nuptials, at the very moment when there appeared no delusion in their prospects of happiness, their misfortunes begin. A nobleman,—and this was at a period when the nobles entertained a retinue of ruffians and Bravos, wretches, who paid by shedding the blood of any who were obnoxious to their patrons, for the protection and immunity they received from them,—cast his destroying eye upon this maiden, and practising, through two of his ruffians, upon the cowardly nature of the parish priest, their marriage was interrupted, and themselves separated and driven from their homes.

The work opens with this part of their adventures, and certainly nothing was ever more characteristically described, or managed with more spirit. Don Abbondio, the parish priest, is worthy of the pen of Cervantes; but he is not the only genuine original in the work, we have two other priests, Friar Christopher, and Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, two of the finest creations of the human mind, if indeed we may so speak of this last, whose rare virtues when living, made him the object of universal love and reverence. If Don Abbondio, by his selfish conduct, seems to be an evidence, of the little influence a long life passed in the exercise of religious duties may have over the human heart, how skilfully has our author erased the impression, by the affecting history and devoted conduct of Friar Christopher, a man in whom the strongest worldly affections had been perfectly subdued by the power of religion. In nothing is the talent of Manzoni shown more conspicuously, than in the contrast between these two men, both of them priests. Who can resist laughing, in the most unrestrained way, at the comic and most natural manner, in which the cowardly Don Abbondio expresses his apprehensions? It is the chord of Sancho Panza which he strikes in us. But who can accompany Friar Christopher to the scene of his voluntary humiliation, see him on his knees before the brother of the proud man he had slain, and enter into the

touching scene that follows, without being overpowered by emotions of compassion and admiration? No one possessed of much sensibility can read this scene without thrilling emotions.

But it is in that still more solemn scene between the Cardinal and the Un-named that we are made conscious of the mighty power of religion over the human heart. If Manzoni had written nothing more than this last scene, and the subsequent one between the Cardinal and Don Abbondio, where Christian virtue is so resplendently set out, from the lips of a man whose practice was in harmony with the sanctity of his doctrine, this story might have claimed to possess pages devoted to the most sublime religious instruction, unrivaled in any work belonging to modern literature.

And who could have anticipated, in the conduct of a story aiming to relate the humble adventures of two poor young people, the introduction of such a character as the Un-named? A conception of the most magnificent order. Another Napoleon, not sending his mandates to the kings and princes of the confederation of the Rhine, but to the lawless nobles surrounding him and their dependants. The Emperor of all the oppressors of the day, the head of a devoted army of Bravos, who had triumphed over all law so long, that his own will was now his only law. And yet, at the very moment we are expecting from this monster in the human shape, the consummation of the worst of villanies, we find him so segregated from other men by his bad pre-eminence, that he was beginning to be oppressed by a sense of his solitariness. How admirably has the author depicted his true condition, how minutely has he laid the operations of the human heart open, and with what consummate skill has he not availed himself of his own creation, not only in the conduct and embellishment of his story, but by throwing, in the conversion of this inexorable sinner, a moral splendor over it, which contains nothing that is false or exaggerated.

In Gertrude, we have another equally surprising evidence of the power of this writer. The episode devoted to her, stands in equally bold relief. This victim of parental tyranny and self-irresolution, is alike conspicuous, where the darkest shades of human conduct, and the most delicate touches of feminine character, vie with each other. She forms a picture where the deepest tones of Carravaggio, and the most exquisite finishing of Leonardo da Vinci, harmoniously meet: we feel in the contemplation of it, as we do when examining the St. Jerome of this last great master, we know not which to admire most, the solemn effect produced by the whole picture, or the almost superhuman fidelity with which each particular hair of his beard is finished.

But it is not upon individual character our author exhausts his power, he has the talent as well as the ambition of a Michael Angelo, making what would be principal with most artists, subordinate in his own creations: thus Manzoni, carried away by his own strength, puts, towards the close of the work, his personages in the back ground, as it were, to place great historical events before us. He paints a whole people delivered over to famine, pestilence and death, and paints with an effect so horrible as to remind us of the power of Murillo. We see the emaciated and enfeebled crowds, perishing from starvation, dragging themselves by day through the streets of Milan, and at night we hear them howling, and wailing, in the last agonies of an attenuated existence. Scarce, however, has he presented this harrowing and most moving spectacle to us, than, as if yielding to the unrestrained force of his talent, he withdraws it, and presents in its place, one still more horrible, and which calls imperiously for all that is left to us of human sympathy. He presents to us the enfeebled survivors of the famine, suddenly become victims of the worst possible kind of desolation, and miserably perishing under the rage of that pestilence, that ravaged the fair plains of Italy, and almost depopulated Milan in 1630. The grandeur of this picture is inimitable, and our author has availed himself in a very happy manner, of this remarkable passage in history, as well to place in relief some incidents both of a terrible and touching nature, as to bring to a close, a plot as happily conceived, as it is ably executed.

If there is a prominent blemish in this attractive work, it is to be found in the tediously minute descriptions, of those actions of its personages, which have little or nothing to do with the conduct of the story: if one of them comes into a room, we are told how he opened the door, which foot he put in first, and then the door must be shut by the right hand or the left, with a precise account of what the other hand was doing, before the actor is allowed to enter upon the business of the story. This habit of minute description—for it is evidently a habit and an inveterate one,—is sometimes turned to the greatest advantage, as in the description of Lucia's wedding dress, than which nothing can be more charming, but it is often vexatiously tedious: it must be remembered, however, that the author has reserved to himself the privilege of making his supposed anonymous writer responsible for every thing that is obnoxious to modern refinement, as he very adroitly has stated in his introduction. We warn our readers, nevertheless, that it is very unsafe to overlook passages of this kind, merely because they look rather unpromising, for some of his most comic thoughts, and finest touches of humor, are very often enclosed in them, and are only to be possessed by a little of that industry which is the price of every thing worth having, as gold and even diamonds are frequently obtained, by taking the trouble to wash an unpromising looking cascalho, or gravel.

A work of such various merit, it is evident,

must be exceedingly difficult to translate. If the translator had supposed it as laborious and exacting a task as he has found it, he certainly would never have undertaken it. Those who are familiar with the Italian idiom, however justly they may remark, that in transfusing from one language into another, much of the refinement of the most poetic of modern languages, has been permitted to evaporate, will be just enough to say that the translator has been faithful. Perhaps one of the most difficult of all literary tasks to perform, is the translation of a work of pre-eminent merit in the Italian, into the English tongue, and that in a too short period of time. A translator of such a work is made constantly to feel, that it is like attempting to paint the fragrance of violets and roses.

Washington City, 1834.

I PROMESSI SPOSI;

OR,

THE BETROTHED LOVERS.

CHAPTER I.

THAT branch of the Lake of Como which turns to the south between two uninterrupted chains of mountains, and which presents numerous bays and gulfs, wherever the elevations jut out or retract themselves, begins almost at once to contract itself, and to take the direction and form of a river, between a promontory on the right, and a spacious shore on the opposite side; and the bridge, which there unites the two banks, appears to announce more distinctly this change to the eye, by fixing the point where the lake ceases to exist, and where the Adda springs forth, again to extend itself into lacustrine dimensions; and where the banks, retiring once more, permit the waters to expand and repose themselves in those new sinuosities which the country presents. The shore, formed by the deposit of three powerful torrents, follows the river, supported by the base of two contiguous mountains, one called San Martino, the other Resegone—a Lombard word—given to it on account of its numerous small peaks and intervening notches, which present the appearance of a saw; so that no one, at first sight, provided it is seen in front—as for example from the ramparts of Milan, which look to the north—can fail to recognize it by that simple natural character, amidst the other mountains, with forms less marked, and with names more obscure, of that distant and extensive ridge.

For a considerable distance the shore rises with a gentle and continuous slope, then breaks into hills and small valleys, steeps and glades, modified by the action of the waters, and the bony spurs of the two mountains. The edge of the shore, abraded by the mouths of the torrents, is almost entirely covered with gravel and pebbles, but the rest consists of fields and vineyards, sprinkled with towns, villas, hamlets, and even woods, in some parts, which stretch themselves back up the sides of the mountains.

Lecco, the principal place of the district, and which gives its name to the territory, is at a short distance from the bridge on the bank of the lake; indeed when the lake is swollen it lies partly in it; a considerable town in our own times, and giving fair promise to become a city. At the period when the circumstances took place which we have undertaken to narrate, this place, even then considerable, was a castle, or place of arms, and was honored by being the head-quarters of a commandant, besides possessing the advantage of a permanent garrison of Spanish soldiers, who taught modesty to the damsels and matrons of the place, not forgetting to pay their court from time to time, to the shoulders of their husbands and fathers. It was their custom too at the beginning of autumn, to spread themselves about in the vineyards, with a view to thin out the grapes, and thus lighten the toils of the vintage to the rustic laborers.

From one of these small towns to the other, from the heights to the shore, from one hill to another, there were, as in our own day, roads and lanes, some of them rough, some steep, some level, and not unfrequently they were depressed and buried between mural rocks, from whence looking aloft, nothing was to be seen but a portion of the sky, or the top of some mountain; and occasionally the way led over open terraces, from whence extensive views were to be obtained of prospects more or less remote, but always enriched by some novelty, furnished by the various features of the vast surrounding scene; now bursting out, now becoming obscured, now peeping forth, and disappearing by turns. Here one point of distance, there another; then the long extent of the vast and varied mirror of water; on this side a lake closed at its extremity, or rather lost in the windings of a group of mountains, and every now and then spreading itself amongst other heights, that reveal themselves one by one; and which, with the landscapes adjacent to its banks, are reflected by the water, in a reversed position. There it is an arm of the river, now it becomes a lake, and then again a river, running to hide its bright serpentine wanderings amongst the mountains that accompany it, and which, diminishing in their size, are themselves almost lost in the distant horizon. The place from which these diversified features may be contemplated, presents a spectacle on every side; the mountain on whose skirts he is treading, unfolds to the traveler, above, and in every direction, its peaks and cliffs, distinct, erect, and varying at every step; opening and spreading out into ridges, what at first appeared to be a single chain, resolving into one summit what before

appeared to be a continuous line; and the pleasing domestic amenity of the slopes, gratefully softening the more savage features of the scene, invests that which is magnificent in the other views, with still greater beauty.

By one of these by-roads, on the evening of the 7th of November, 1628, Don Abbondio, curate of one of the parishes alluded to, was leisurely returning home from his walk. The name of the parish, nor yet his own family name, is not found in the manuscript, in this, nor in any other part of it. He went on tranquilly repeating the evening office, and occasionally between the psalms, closed the breviary, keeping the fore-finger of his right hand in it to mark the place, and grasping it with the other behind his back, pursued his path, his eyes bent to the ground, and pushing with his feet, towards the wall, the loose stones which embarrassed the path; then raising his head, and indolently casting his eyes around, he fixed them on the ridge of a mountain, where the already diminished light of the sun, escaping by the clefts of the opposite heights, left their prominent spurs in relief, like so many broad and unequal masses of purple. Having opened the breviary again, and recited another page, he reached a turn of the road where it was always his custom to raise his eyes from the book and to look before him, which he did upon this occasion. From this turn the road for about sixty paces kept a straight course, and then divided into two paths in the form of a Y; that to the right led up to the mountain, and was the road to the parsonage; the left path descended into the valley as far as a mountain stream; in this direction the wall did not reach higher than the hips of the traveler. The inner walls of these two paths, instead of terminating in an angle, stopped at a small chapel, upon which were painted certain long figures, twisting about and ending in a point, which according to the intention of the artist, and in the eyes of the inhabitants of the neighborhood, were to pass for flames; alternating with these flames, were certain other indiscribable figures, intended for souls in purgatory; the souls and the flames were all of a red brick color upon a grayish ground, with the mortar here and there cracked and fallen from the wall.

The curate having turned the corner, and directed, as was his custom, his looks to the chapel, saw what he had by no means expected to see, and what he would willingly not have seen. At the confluence, if we may use the term, of the two paths, there were two men opposite to each other, one of them astride of the low wall, with one foot dangling on the outside, and the other planted on the ground in the road; his companion was standing, leaning against the wall, with his arms crossed upon his breast, Their garb, their deportment, and what the curate could discern of their aspect from the place where he stood, left no doubt as to who they were. Each of them had around his head a green net, which fell upon his left shoulder, terminating in a great tassel; and from beneath this net, an enormous lock of hair fell upon the forehead, two long mustachois curled at the extremities, the border of the doublet was covered by a girdle of polished leather, to which a pair of pistols was appended with hooks; a small horn filled with powder, slung on the breast, on the right side of the ample and swollen out nether garments, a pocket from which the handle of a knife projected, a large sword hanging from the left side, with an enormous open hilt, formed of plates of brass united into a cypher, and well scoured and bright. It was evident at the first glance they were individuals of the class of men called Bravos.

This class, now entirely extinct, was then in a very flourishing state in Lombardy, and dated very far back. To form a more accurate idea of it, some authentic passages are here annexed, explanatory of the characteristics of these people, of the great efforts made to extinguish them, and of their obstinate and audacious existence.

As far back as the 8th of April, 1583, the most illustrious and excellent Don Charles of Arragon, Prince of Castelvetrano, Duke of Terranuova, Marquis of Avola, Count of Burgeto, grand admiral, and grand constable of Sicily, governor of Milan and captain-general of His Catholic Majesty in Italy, "fully informed of the intolerable misery which has been brought upon, and which stills exists in this city of Milan, by reason of Bravos and vagabonds," published a proclamation against them, "declaring and describing all comprehended in the proclamation, to be esteemed as Bravos and vagabonds who, either being foreigners or natives, have no vocation, or, who having one, do not follow it; but without recompense, or for it, attach themselves to any cavalier or gentleman, officer or merchant, to give them aid or succour, or, indeed, as it may be presumed, with a view to practice machinations against others." All these are ordered, in the space of six days, to leave the country, with the penalty of being sent to the galleys in case of resistance, granting to the officers of justice, the most ample and unrestrained power for the execution of the order.

But in the following year, on the 12th of April, the same nobleman perceives, "that this city is generally full of the said Bravos, who have returned to their former mode of life, not in the least reformed in their manners, nor diminished in their numbers," published another edict, still more rigorous and decided, in which, amongst other directions, he prescribes,

"That whatsoever person, whether a stranger or native of the city, who shall be proved by two witnesses, to be commonly reputed to be a Bravo, and to be so called—although it may not be in proof that he has committed a crime—shall upon the sole cause of its being imputed to him to be a Bravo, and without any other process, save that of the information, be by the said judges, or by any one of them, put

to the cord and rack; and although he may not confess the commission of any crime, shall immediately afterwards be sent to the galleys for the space of three years, solely on account of his being reputed to be a Bravo, as before declared; his excellency being resolved to be obeyed by every one."

Such confident and resolute language, from so powerful a personage, and accompanied with such orders, it might be believed, would at once drive all the Bravos out of the country; but the testimony of a personage of no less authority, nor less endowed with dignities, obliges us to think differently. The most illustrious and excellent Don John Fernandez de Velasco, constable of Castile, grand chamberlain to the King, Duke of the city of Frias, Count of Haro and Castlenuovo, Lord of the house of Velasco, and of that of the seven infanti of Lara, governor of the state of Milan, &c, on the 5th of June, 1593, fully informed "of the injury and ruinous mischief proceeding from bravos and vagabonds, and of the detriment that class of men are to the public welfare, and of the delusions they practice on public justice," orders them again, within the space of six days, to be banished the country, reiterating nearly the same denunciations and orders of his predecessor. On the 23d of May, 1598, "informed, with no small displeasure, that the number of persons of this class is daily increasing in this city and territory, and that night and day, nothing is heard from them but of wounds purposely inflicted, of homicides, of robberies and every sort of crime committed by them; with which they become more familiar owing to the confidence with which these Bravos rely upon the protection they receive from their chiefs and employers;" the same remedy is applied, increasing the dose, as in cases of all obstinate maladies. "Every one, therefore," he concludes, "must carefully look that he does not disobey the present proclamation in any particular whatever, as in such case he need not count upon the clemency of his excellency, but will experience his rigor and indignation; being resolved and determined that this shall be his last and peremptory monition."

This was, however, not found to be the case by the most illustrious and excellent Don Peter Henriquez de Acevedo, Count of Fuentes, captain and governor of the state of Milan, and he had very good reasons for it. On the 5th of December, 1600, he issued a new warning, full of energetic provisions: "Fully informed of the misery existing in this state and territory on account of the great number of Bravos existing in them, and resolved to extirpate totally such a pernicious race, with a firm determination that his orders shall be completely executed, with every rigor, and so as to leave no hope."

We must suppose, however, that he did not enter into the practical execution of these plans, with the zeal that he carried into the contrivance of his plots, and the raising up of opponents to his great enemy, Henry the 4th; since history attests how successful he was in arming the Duke of Savoy against that sovereign, and causing him to lose more than one city; also, how he succeeded in entangling the Duke of Biron in his plots, and causing him to lose his head. But as to this desperate race of Bravos, certain it is, that it continued to flourish up to the 22d of September, 1612. At that period the most illustrious and excellent Don John di Mendoza, Marquis of Hynojosa, gentleman, &c. governor, &c. seriously thought of extirpating it. To this effect he transmitted to Pandolfo and Marco Tullio Malatesti, printers to the king, the usual proclamation, corrected and enlarged, that it might be promulgated to the extermination of the Bravos. But these survived to receive, the 24th December, 1816, the same and still heavier blows from the most illustrious and excellent Don Gomez Suavez di Figueroa, Duke of Feria, governor, &c. Nevertheless, not being entirely overcome by these shocks, the most illustrious and excellent Don Gonzalo Fernandez di Cordova, under whose government the affair of Don Abbondio occurred, found himself constrained to republish the ancient decree against the Bravos, on the 5th October, 1627, one year, one month, and two days previous to that memorable event.

Nor was this the last proclamation, although we do not deem it relevant to mention any that were published since the period of our story. One, of the 13th of February, 1632, however, we will notice, in which the most illustrious and excellent Duke of Feria, &c. the second time governor, informs us that the most atrocious disorders existing in the city, proceed from the class of men called Bravos.

This is sufficient to render it certain, that at the period of our story Bravos existed.

That the two individuals of this class were posted there in expectation of some one, was a thing too evident; but what most ruffled Don Abbondio, was a feeling assured by certain movements they made, that he was the person they were waiting for. For when he came in sight, they looked at each other, raising their heads in such a manner, that it was evident both had said, "this is the man." The man who was astride of the wall, had risen up and placed his foot on the ground, the other had removed from the wall, and both were approaching him. Holding his open breviary before him, as if he were reading, he lifted his eye somewhat to discern their motions, and perceiving that they began to advance just as he turned, a thousand thoughts rushed upon him. He hastily considered whether there was any path to the right or the left, betwixt the bravos and himself, but as quickly remembered there was none. He examined himself rapidly, whether he had offended any person of importance, or any vindictive individual; but even in that disturbed state of mind, the soothing testimony of his conscience somewhat tranquilized him.

The Bravos drawing near, looked him steadily in the face. Putting the fore and middle finger of his left hand into his collar, as if to arrange it, and carrying his fingers round his neck, he turned his face a little behind, and from the corner of his eye endeavored to discover, if from any direction assistance might be expected; but no one was coming. He threw a momentary glance over the low wall into the fields, but no one was there: lastly, he gave a quiet look upon the road before him, but no one was to be seen there but the Bravos. What was to be done? To turn back—it was too late. To fly, was only inviting them to follow him, or do worse. Unable to avoid the danger, he hastened to meet it, for those dubious moments were too painful to him, not to desire to shorten them. Quickening his pace, he recited a verse with a louder voice, composed his features into as much tranquillity and hilarity as he could, made every effort to call up a smile, and when he came close in front of these honest gentlemen, "here I am," said he, mentally, and came to a stand.

"Signor curate," said one of the two, looking him fixedly in the face.

"What is your pleasure," immediately, replied Don Abbondio, raising his eyes from the book, and holding it wide open with both his hands.

"It is your intention," pursued the other, with the angry and menacing look of one who has detected his inferior about to perpetrate some villany. "It is your intention to marry Renzo Tramaglino and Lucia Mondella, tomorrow!"

"That is,"—answered Don Abbondio with a tremulous voice, "that is—you two gentlemen—are men of the world, and know very well how these things are done. The poor curate has nothing to do with it—they make up their little matters amongst themselves, and then—then, they come to us, just as they would go to a bank to redeem their pledges. We are the servants of the commune."

"Well, well," said the Bravo, with a subdued voice, but in a solemn tone of command, "this marriage must not take place to-morrow, or ever."

"But, gentlemen," replied Don Abbondio, with the affable and mild tone of a man who seeks to persuade an impatient person, "but, gentlemen, be so indulgent just as to put yourselves in my place. If it depended upon me—you see clearly, I have no interest in—"

"Come, come," said the Bravo, "if this affair was to be decided by such idle talking, you would give us the bag to hold. We know nothing, and we don't want to know any thing more. A man once warned—you understand me."

"But, gentlemen, you are too just, too reasonable—"

"But," interrupted the other man, who had not yet spoken, "but the marriage shall not take place, or ——; and, by ——, he who celebrates shall never repent it, for he shall have no time to do so, and ——," here another oath.

"Be quiet, now," replied the first speaker, "the signor curate knows how the world wags, and we are honest fellows, that don't intend to hurt him, if he acts discreetly. Signor, the most illustrious Don Rodrigo salutes you very dearly." This name produced in Don Abbondio the same effect that the lightning of a fierce nocturnal tempest does; confusedly revealing, for an instant, objects before in darkness, and increasing the terror. As if by instinct, he made a profound bow, and replied, "If, gentlemen, you could only suggest any thing—"

"Oh! suggest to your worship, indeed, who understands latin!" interrupted the Bravo again, with a laugh between vulgarity and ferocity. "That's your business! and above all, be careful not to let a word escape about the advice we have given you, for your own good, otherwise—hem—it would be the same thing as if you were to marry them. Well, what shall we tell the most illustrious Don Rodrigo on your part?"

"My respect—"

"Explain yourself, signor curate.'

—"Disposed—always disposed—to obedience;" and, uttering these words, he was not aware himself whether he had given a promise, or had merely uttered an ordinary compliment. The Bravos received them, or pretended to receive them, in the most serious sense.

"It is all right, and good night, signor curate," said one of them, in the act of moving away with his companion. Don Abbondio, who, a few moments before, would have given an eye out of his body to avoid them, was desirous now to prolong the conversation and the treaty. "Gentlemen," he began, shutting the book with both his hands, but they, without listening further to him, went off by the road he had come, and pursued their way, singing some ribaldry, altogether unworthy of being noted down. Poor Don Abbondio remained a moment with his mouth open, as if he were enchanted, then took the path that led to his house, advancing one leg before the other, with as much difficulty as if he had the cramp, and in a state of mind which the reader will be better able to comprehend, when he has become better informed of the real character of this personage, and of the temper of the times in which it had been his lot to live.

Don Abbondio—and the reader must have perceived it—had not come into this world with the heart of a lion. But from his earliest years he could not but perceive that one of the most embarrassing situations for such times, was that of an animal without claws and without fangs, and without the slightest inclination in the world to be devoured. The power of the law gave no protection, in any matter, to the tranquil and inoffensive man, who was

destitute of every means to inspire others with fear. Not that laws and penalties were wanting against private violence; on the contrary, the laws came down in showers. Crimes were enumerated and particularized with minute prolixity; penalties were extravagantly exorbitant, and if apparently insufficient, were increased for every case at the will of the legislator himself, and a hundred executors of justice. Legal proceedings had no object but to remove from the judge every impediment in the way of condemnation, and the extracts we have given from the proclamations respecting the Bravos, form a small but a faithful picture of this state of things. Notwithstanding all this, and indeed in a great measure for this reason, those decrees, thus republished, and reinvigorated from one government to another, were nothing but pompous evidences of the impotence of their authors; or, if they produced any immediate effect, it was chiefly that of adding many vexations to those which disorderly persons inflicted upon the peaceful and the feeble, and of increasing their own violence and craftiness.

Impunity was organized, and had roots which the decrees could not reach, or could not remove. Such were the asylums, such the privileges of some classes, partly acknowledged by legal authority, partly tolerated by a rancorous silence, or denied by vain protestations, but maintained in fact, and guarded by those classes, and almost by every individual, with the activity of self interest, and the jealousy of punctilio. This impunity, now menaced and insulted, but not destroyed by the proclamations, at every threat, and every attack, would naturally adopt new schemes, and make new efforts to preserve itself. And so it turned out; for when the decrees directed to the repression of violence appeared, the disturbers of the peace sought in their strong holds, new and more opportune means to keep up that disorder, which these mandates prohibited. The innocent man who had not the power of defending himself, and who had no protector, was liable at every step to be molested and deprived of his liberty; for with a view to bring every man within the power of the law, for the prevention or punishment of crimes, every movement of private individuals was made subject to the arbitrary will of a thousand magistrates and officers of justice. But he who before the commission of a crime, had taken his measures to seek seasonable refuge in a convent, or in a palace where the police would never dare to set a foot; or he who without taking any measures, wore a livery which engaged the vanity and interest of a powerful family to defend him, was covered as with a shield; that man was free to do what he pleased, and could laugh at the impotent blustering of the proclamations.

Those even who were charged with the execution of their provisions, were, some of them, connected by blood with the privileged party, whilst others depended on them for patronage: one and the other, by education, by interest, by habit, by imitation, had embraced these maxims, and were very careful not to offer any violence to them, out of mere affection for a piece of paper posted on the corners of the streets. Those, in fact, entrusted with the immediate execution of these denunciations, had they been as enterprising as heroes, obedient as monks, and devoted as martyrs, would never have been able to accomplish the work, inferior as they were in numbers to those they had to commence hostilities with; and with the frequent probability of being abandoned, and even sacrificed, by the power which in theory, and in the abstract—so to speak—instructed them to act.

But, besides, these men consisted generally of the most abject and violent individuals of the times; their occupation too was considered a base one, by those it was intended to awe, and the name they were designated by, a reproach. It was then very natural that these men, instead of risking, and even throwing away their lives in impossible undertakings, should sell their inaction, and even their connivance to the powerful; and that they should reserve the exercise of their execrated authority, and the force they possessed, for occasions devoid of danger, and where they could oppress and vex pacific men unable to defend themselves.

The man who seeks to offend, or who fears at every instant to be offended, naturally seeks allies and companions. Hence the tendency amongst individuals to congregate into classes, to form new ones, and for every one to endeavor to impart the greatest power to that of which he is a member, was in those times carried to the greatest length. The clergy was vigilant to defend and to extend their immunities; the nobility, their privileges; the military, their exemptions. The merchants, the artisans were enrolled in companies and fraternities; the lawyers formed a league, and even the physicians became a corporation. Each of these little oligarchies possessed its own special and peculiar power; in each the individual found his advantage in employing for his own account, and in proportion to his authority and dexterity, the united strength of the many. The more honest availed themselves of this advantage for their own defence; the cunning and the wicked profited by it to forward those bad ends, for which their own personal means were insufficient, and to secure impunity. The power, however, of these various associations was very unequal, and in the country especially, the rich and powerful nobleman, with a troop of Bravos, and surrounded by peasants habituated by familiar tradition, and interested or compelled to consider himself almost as a soldier or subject of his patron, exercised a power, against which no other association could there have made any effectual resistance.

Our Abbondio was not noble, was not rich, he was not courageous; from his infancy he

had been accustomed, in such a state of society, to play the part of an earthen vase, traveling in company with a great many vessels made of cast iron, and had, with a hearty good will, yielded to the desire of his parents, who wished him to be a priest. To tell the truth, he had not reflected much upon the obligations and the noble ends of that ministry to which he was dedicating himself: to be assured of an existence that had both its comforts and superfluities, and to be the member of a powerful and revered class, appeared to him two reasons more than sufficient for his choice. But no class whatever provides for the individual, or secures him beyond a certain point; there is not one which excuses him from the necessity of adopting an individual system of action. Don Abbondio, continually absorbed in thoughts about his own safety, was not solicitous about those advantages, for the possession of which it would have been necessary to take a more active part, or to run some risks. His system principally consisted in getting out of the way of opposition, and of yielding to that which he could not avoid. It was an unarmed neutrality in all the contests which broke out around him, arising from the disputes, then very frequent, between the clergy and the lay authorities; those not less frequent between the officers of justice and the nobles, the magistracy and the nobility, soldiers and bravos, even to the vulgar quarrels among the country people, beginning with harsh words, and terminating with fists and knives. If he was absolutely compelled to take sides between two disputants, he always took the side of the strongest, keeping however, somewhat aloof, and taking care to make the other understand that he was not voluntarily his enemy: he seemed to say to him from his position, "why have not you contrived to be stronger than him? I would have been on your side in that case." Thus, keeping aloof from the powerful, shutting his eyes upon their capricious treacheries, agreeing in a submissive manner with those who had more serious and deliberate intentions, forcing by his bows and cheerful respect, a smile, even from the most sullen and contemptuous when he fell in with them, the poor man had succeeded in paddling his bark along for sixty years, without encountering any great storms.

Not but that he too had a little gall in his composition; this practiced suffering, this constantly admitting every body to be in the right, so many bitter mouthfuls swallowed in silence, had irritated him to such a degree, that if he had not seized now and then upon occasions to give vent to his feelings, his health certainly would have suffered. But as there were a few persons in the world around him, whom he knew could do him no harm, so with them he could now and then get rid of the bad humor long pent up in him, and vent the inclination that even he had to indulge in imaginary evils, and to complain about trifles. Besides this, he was a severe censor of those who did not act precisely as he did, provided he could be so without even the most remote danger. The man that had got a beating, was at least, not a—very—very prudent man; and he that got killed, had always been a very troublesome person. If any one, venturing to maintain his own opinions against some one in power, got his head broke, Don Abbondio was sure to find him in the wrong a little, and this was not very difficult to do, because right and wrong can never be cut so neatly in two, but that one of them has more than belongs to it. Above all, he declaimed against those of his brethren, who, at their own risk, espoused the part of the weak and oppressed, against the overbearing and strong. This, he said, was like purchasing trouble with ready money, or like stopping to straighten a dog's legs; and he averred, with some austerity, that it was meddling with profane things, at the expense of the dignity of the sacred profession. Against these he inveighed, either in a very small circle, and where he knew his auditors, with the greater vehemence, when sure that they were not persons to resent what came personally home to them. He had also a favorite sentence with which he closed all his harangues on this head—that he that looks to himself, and does not meddle with other people's affairs, never gets into trouble.

My five and twenty readers may now suppose what sort of impression the encounter, which has been just related, must have made upon the mind of this poor man. The awe with which those two physiognomies, and those terrible words inspired him; the menace of a nobleman never known to threaten in vain, a system of quiet existence which had cost him so many years of study and patience, disconcerted at once, a narrow path pointed out to him, full of asperities and hard to pursue—a path to which he could perceive no end—all these thoughts were tumultuously jostling each other in the inclined head of Don Abbondio. "If Renzo could be dismissed in peace, with a polite no, it would be well enough, but he will be asking for reasons. And what reasons have I got to give him, for the love of heaven? And—and—and he has a sort of head—he is a kind of lamb if he is left to himself, but if any one contradicts him ——ay—ay—and thinking of nothing on earth but that Lucia, over head and ears in love with her, like—— A pack of young fellows, that because they have got nothing to do, must fall in love, and then they must be married, and wont think of any thing else, least of all, of the trouble into which inoffensive honest men are drawn by them.—Unfortunate that I am! What had those two villanous faces to do, to come and stand right in my road, and bring this upon my head? What have I to do with it; is it I who wants to be married? Why did not they go first and speak to —— there again, see how things come into my head always when it is too late. If I had but thought just now of hinting to

them to carry their embassy——" But here it flashed upon him that his regretting that he had not been a counsellor and co-operator in this infamous affair, was iniquity enough of itself, and so he turned all his resentments against the man who had thus interfered to deprive him of his peace. He had no knowledge of Don Roderigo but by sight and reputation, and had never had any thing further to do with him, than the bringing his chin to his breast, and his hat to the ground, the few times he had met him abroad. It had happened to him to defend, upon more than one occasion, the reputation of that nobleman, against those, who in a low voice, sighing and raising their eyes to heaven, invoked maledictions upon his actions: a hundred times he had declared that he was a very respectable cavalier. But at this juncture, he gave him in his heart all those titles, that he had never heard others apply to him, without hastily interrupting them by—"Oh! this is too bad."

Arrived, amidst the tumult of such thoughts, at the door of his house, which stood at the highest part of the grounds, and hastily putting the key, which he held in his hand, into the lock, he opened it, entered, and carefully closing it, gave vent to his desire to be in safe company, by calling out, "Perpetua, Perpetua!" and moving to the small room where he was sure to find her spreading the table for supper. Perpetua was, as every one must see, the servant of Don Abbondio, at once faithful and affectionate; knowing how to obey and how to command, upon proper occasions, how to put up too with the grumblings and whims of her master, and make him put up with her own, now becoming more frequent from day to day; for she had passed the synodal age of forty, and was still single, having, as she said, refused every offer that had been made to her, or for a reason alleged by her female friends, that no dog had yet taken a fancy to her.

"Coming," replied Perpetua, placing on the small table in the accustomed place, the little flask of Don Abbondio's favorite wine, and moving slowly; but she had not yet reached the threshold of the room, when he came in with such a disordered gait, such dark looks, and with his countenance so distorted, that it did not want even the experienced eyes of Perpetua to discover at the first glance, that something very extraordinary had happened to him.

"O mercy! what is the matter, master?"

"Nothing, nothing," replied Don Abbondio, and sinking out of breath into his great chair.

"How, nothing? Will you tell me so? looking so frightful as you do. Something very terrible has happened."

"O for the love of heaven! when I say nothing, either it is nothing, or it is something I can say nothing about."

"What can't you even tell me? Who is there but me to take care of your health? Who is there to advise with?"

"Alas, alas, be silent. Make no further preparations, but give me a glass of my wine."

"And yet you will tell me that nothing is the matter with you," said Perpetua, filling the glass, and holding it in her hand, as if she was only going to give it as a return for the confidence she was waiting for.

"Here give it—give it me," said Don Abbondio, taking the glass with an unsteady hand, and hastily emptying it as if it had been a dose of medicine.

"Do you mean to force me to go asking here and there, what it is that has happened to my master?" said Perpetua, standing erect before him, with her arms akimbo, and her elbows sticking out, steadfastly looking at him, as if she would draw the secret out of his eyes.

"For the love of heaven! Don't get up any petulant, clamorous—this is a matter—a matter—in which—life——"

"Life?"

"Life!"

"My master knows well, that every time he has seriously told me any thing in confidence, I have never——"

"Ay, indeed! For instance when——"

Perpetua perceived that she had struck the wrong note, and suddenly changing her tone, "Master," said she, with a touching voice, and well calculated to soften him, "I have ever been affectionate to you, and if now I want to be told what has happened, it is from my great solicitude for you, that I may be able to assist, to give you good counsel, to raise your spirits——"

The fact is Don Abbondio had perhaps as great an inclination to unbosom himself of his painful secret, as Perpetua had to learn it; so that, after repelling more and more feebly the fresh and more persevering attacks which she made, after having made her more than once swear that she would not breathe a syllable of the matter, at last, with many hesitations, and many an alas! he acquainted her with his wretched case. When he came to the terrible name of the man whose commands were upon him, he made Perpetua repeat a new and more solemn obligation; at length, having pronounced the name, he let himself fall into the back of the chair, with a deep sigh, raising his hands in an attitude at once of command and supplication, saying, "For the love of heaven!"

"Mercy!" ejaculated Perpetua. "O what a villain! O what a tyrant! Oh, what a man without the fear of God!"

"Will you be silent, or will you entirely ruin me?"

"O! we are here alone, and no one can hear us. But my poor master, what will you do?"

"See, there,"—said Don Abbondio, with a spiteful tone, "see, what excellent counsel this woman is giving me! She asks me what I

shall do—what I shall do, just as if the danger was hanging over her head, and she looked to me for aid."

"Yes, but I have got some little poor opinion of my own to give, notwithstanding, but then——"

"But then, let us hear."

"My opinion would be, since every one says our archbishop is a saint, and a man of nerve, who is not afraid of villanous faces, I would advise you to write him a handsome letter to inform him how——"

"Do be silent; be silent! Are these counsels to give to a poor man? If I should get the load of a gun fired into my back—God deliver me from it! Would the archbishop take it out for me?"

"People don't throw such loads about like comfits,* and it would be indeed bad if these scoundrel dogs were to bite every time they bark. I have always observed that the man who dares show his teeth, and stand up for himself, is sure to be respected, and it is exactly because you never have any mind of your own, that we are reduced to this point, that every body falls upon us without leave or license, to——"

"Will you be silent?"

"I have done, but it is most certain that when the world finds out, that any one, always, and upon every occasion, is ready to submit, and——"

"Will you be silent? Is this a time for such stuff and nonsense?"

"Well, well; you will think upon it to night; but in the meantime don't make yourself ill, and ruin your health, take a mouthful of something."

"I'll think of it," grumbled out Don Abbondio. "Certainly I shall think of it, how can I do otherwise than think of it?" And he got up, continuing "I'll take nothing, nothing; I've something else to do—to be sure, I know I must think of it. But that such a business should fall upon my shoulders; me, indeed, of all the——"

"Let this other drop go down," said Perpetua, pouring it out, "you know that this always settles your stomach."

"It will take some other medicine now! some other medicine now! some other medicine now!"

Thus exclaiming, he took the light, continuing to murmur, "quite a trifle to be sure! an honest man like myself! What is to be done tomorrow?" And uttering similar complaints, he moved towards his bed-chamber. Having reached the door, he stopped a moment, and turning round to Perpetua, he placed his finger on his lips, and with a slow and solemn tone, breathed out, "for the love of heaven!" and disappeared.

*During the festival of the Carnival they throw sugar comfits at each other in the streets.

TRANSL.

CHAPTER II.

We are told that the Prince of Conde slept profoundly the night preceding the battle of Rocroi; but, first, he was extremely fatigued, and, secondly, he had made all his necessary arrangements, and directed what was to be done in the morning. Don Abbondio instead, knew nothing beyond the fact that the next day was to be the day of battle, and hence a great portion of the night was spent in consultations with himself full of anguish. To pay no attention to the intimation of these Bravos, nor to their threats, and celebrate the marriage, was a course he would not take the trouble to reflect upon. To confide to Renzo what had happened, and contrive some accommodation with him—God deliver us! "Be careful not to let a word escape, otherwise—hem—." These were the words of one of the Bravos, and the recollection of that "hem," not only disposed Don Abbondio not to transgress such a law, but induced him to repent his conversation with Perpetua. To fly! Where? And afterwards? How many troubles, and how many things to relate! At every expedient that he rejected, the poor man turned himself over on the other side. The best method, as it appeared to him, was to gain time by putting Renzo off. It occurred opportunely, that but a few days were wanting to the season when all marriages were prohibited—"And if I can talk that young fellow over for those few days, then I shall have two months to myself, and in two months many things may happen." He thought of various pretexts to bring forward, and although they appeared rather slight, still he encouraged himself in the thought that they would derive some weight from his authority, and that his great experience would give him an advantage over an ignorant youth. Let us see, said he to himself: his head is full of his mistress, and I am thinking about my own skin. I am most interested in the matter, setting aside that I am more knowing than he is. My dear son, if your back itches, I can't help it, but they shan't scratch me, I'm determined. Having composed his mind with a plan he determined to adopt, he at last closed his eyes; but such sleep! such dreams! Bravos, Don Rodrigo, Renzo, winding roads, flights, pursuits, screams, blunderbusses!

The first awakening after distress and trouble, is a bitter moment. The mind scarce reposed, recurs to the habitual idea of antecedent tranquillity; but the thought of the new state of things too soon rudely presents itself, and the disappointment is the more keen at that instantaneous trial. Sorrowfully tasting this bitter cup, Don Abbondio recapitulated the designs he had formed over night, confirmed himself in them, arranged them in a practicable form, arose, and remained waiting for Renzo with apprehension, yet with impatience.

Lorenzo, or as every one called him, Renzo,

did not oblige him to wait long. Scarce had the hour arrived, when he thought he might present himself to the curate without being indiscreet, than he went there with the joyful speed of a youth of twenty years old, who was on that day to be married to the woman he loved. He had been from his childhood left without parents, and followed the trade of a silk spinner, an hereditary occupation—if the expression may be used—in his family; a trade in past years lucrative enough, but now in a declining state; though not so much so, but that an expert workman might make a very honest livelihood by it. This branch of industry was becoming daily less profitable, but the continual emigration of operatives into the neighboring states, produced by promises, privileges, and great wages, was nevertheless not so detrimental as to leave those who remained without resources. Besides his trade, Renzo possessed a small place which he caused to be cultivated, and upon which he worked himself when he was not engaged in the silk business, so that his condition might be called comfortable. And although that year was less abundant even than the preceding ones, and a scarcity had already begun to exist, still he, who from the moment he had fixed his eyes upon Lucia, had become an economist, found himself very well provided for, and had not to quarrel for his bread. He appeared before Don Abbondio, in great gala, with a plume of various colors in his hat, his dagger with its handsome handle in the pocket of his trowsers, and with a festive air, and a free manner about him, then common amongst the most quiet men. The doubtful and mysterious reception which Don Abbondio gave him, made a singular contrast to the joyous and resolute demeanor of the youth.

"He is thinking about something or other," said Renzo to himself, and then addressed him thus: "I am come, signor, to learn at what hour it will be convenient for us to come to church."

"What day are you speaking of?"

"How? what day? does not your worship remember that this is the day fixed on?"

"To day!" replied Don Abbondio, as if it had been mentioned for the first time. "To day, to-day, have patience; but to-day, I cannot."

"You cannot, to-day? Why, what has happened?"

"First—I am unwell, you see."

"I am sorry for it; but what you will have to do, will take such a short time, and will fatigue you so little—"

"Besides—besides—besides—"

"And what besides, signor curate?"

"Besides there are some difficulties."

"Difficulties? what difficulties can there be?"

"You must be in my place to know the difficulties that are in these affairs—how many things to give an account of. I am too good natured, I think of nothing but removing obstacles, and of facilitating every thing, and of doing things to gratify other people. I go beyond my own duty, and then reproaches are thrown at me, and worse."

"But, in the name of heaven, don't keep me in this suspense; and tell me at once what the reason is!"

"Do you know how many formalities are necessary to constitute a regular marriage?"

"I ought to know something of it," said Renzo, beginning to get warm, "for you have put me to trouble enough for some days past. But now, has not your worship expedited every thing—is not every thing done that was to be done?"

"Every thing, every thing, as it appears to you: have patience, therefore. I am an ass, and go beyond my duty, that I may not give pain to others. But now—well, well—enough—I know what I say. We poor curates are between the anvil and the hammer. You are impatient—I pity you, poor young man, and my superiors—enough—I must not tell every thing. Aye, aye, we are thrust in between."

"But explain to me at once, what is this other formality to be attended to, and it shall be done directly."

"Do you know how many direct impediments there are?"

"What should I know about impediments, your worship?"

"*Error, conditio, votum, cognatio, crimen,*

"*Cultus, disparitas, vis, ordo,*

"Si sis affinis—"

"Are you making game of me? What can I make of your worship's *latinorum?*"

"If you don't know these things then, have patience, and be satisfied with those who do know them."

"Oh, oh—indeed."

"Come, dear Renzo, don't get angry, for I am ready to do every thing that depends upon me. I—I want to see you happy. Eh! when I think how comfortably you was living, that you wanted nothing, and then this whim about matrimony to get into your head—"

"Why, what strange language this is, signor," broke out Renzo, with an expression of countenance betwixt astonishment and anger.

"I am only telling you—have patience—I am only telling you—I wish you would be content."

"In the end, then—"

"In the end, then, dear son, I am not to blame; the law was not made by me, and before concluding a marriage, we are expressly obliged to make many and many inquiries, to be sure that there are no impediments."

"Oh stuff—tell me at once what impediment has sprung up?"

"Have patience, these are not things to decypher thus, standing up on our feet. It will be nothing at all, so I hope; but neither more nor less, there are inquiries that must be made. The text is clear and obvious, *antequam matrimonium denuntiet*—"

"I have told you I will have none of your latin."

"But it is necessary that I should explain to you—"

"But have not you once made these inquiries?"

"I have not made them all, as I ought to have made them, I tell you."

"Why did not you make them in season? Why tell me every thing was prepared? Why wait—"

"There now! You reproach me for my too exceeding goodness. I have facilitated every thing to serve you more promptly; but—but now things have—enough, I know."

"And what does your worship expect me to do?"

"Have patience for a day or two, dear son, a day or two is not eternity—have patience."

"For how long?"

We are in port now, said Don Abbondio to himself, and putting on an affable air, "Come," said he, "in a fortnight, I will try and—"

"Fifteen days, why this is something strange indeed. Every thing that you wished to be done, has been done; the day has been fixed, and the day has arrived, and now I am told to wait fifteen days. Fifteen!" said he, in a high and angry tone, extending his arm, and flourishing his fist in the air. There is no knowing with what act he would have followed the expression of that number, if Don Abbondio, taking him by the arm in an earnest, yet affectionate and timid manner, had not stopped him, saying, "Come, come, don't get warm, for the love of heaven. I will try—I will see if in a week I can—"

"And Lucia, what shall I say to her?"

"That it has been a mistake of my own."

"And the scandal there will be about it."

"Say that I have made a mistake, from too much haste, too much inclination to serve you. Throw all the blame on me. Can I say more? Come, in one week."

"And after that, will there be no impediment?"

"When I tell you——"

"Well, I will keep quiet for a week, but remember when that is over, I will not be put off with talking, and so good day." Having said this, he left the curate with a somewhat stiffer bow than he was accustomed to make, and with a look that had not much reverence in its expression.

Having got into the road, he directed his steps with a disappointed heart, towards the house of his betrothed; amidst his vexation the colloquy he had had with the curate was revolved in his mind, and every time it appeared still more extraordinary to him. The cold and embarrassed reception of Don Abbondio, his language at once restrained and impatient, his two grey eyes, which, while he spoke, were wandering about here and there, as if they were afraid to meet even the words that were issuing from his lips, his affected ignorance of the appointment which had been expressly concerted, and above all, his alluding to some great reason, about which he had never expressed himself clearly: all these circumstances put together, induced Renzo to think that there was some mystery in the affair, that had nothing to do with the excuses Don Abbondio had given him. The youth was upon the very point of turning back again, to question him more closely, and make him explain himself more clearly, but raising his eyes, he saw Perpetua a little before him, who was going into a small garden a few paces from the house. Calling to her to open the wicket, he quickened his pace, joined her, and detained her there, with a view to engage her in conversation, that he might get out of her something more satisfactory.

"Good day, Perpetua; I had hoped that today we should all have been very merry together."

"Ah, poor Renzo; but God's will must be done."

"Do me a favor. The signor curate has been making a fool of me with certain reasons I have not been able to comprehend; explain to me better why he cannot or will not marry us to day."

"Oh, do you think I know my master's secrets?"

There is some mystery in it, as I supposed, thought Renzo, and to lead her on he said,

"Come Perpetua, let us be friends, tell me what you know, help a poor young fellow."

"A bad thing to be born poor, my dear Renzo!"

"It is true," he replied, his suspicions becoming stronger, and to get a little nearer to the matter, added "It is true, but is it for priests to act unfairly with poor people?"

"Listen, Renzo, I can say nothing, because ——I—I know nothing; but I can assure you this, that my master does not wish to do you or any one else wrong, he is not to blame."

"Whose fault is it then?" asked Renzo, with a negligent manner, but with his heart drawn up, and his ear all intent.

"When I tell you that I know nothing—— Why, I may speak in defence of my master, it distresses me when people make him do things that are disobliging to others. Poor man! if he does wrong, it is from too much goodness. There is plenty enough in this world of rogues, and of rich and powerful people, of men without the fear of God——"

Rogues! rich and powerful people, thought Renzo, these are not his superiors he talked of.

"Come," said he, concealing his agitation with an effort, "come, tell me who it is."

"Ah, you want to make me tell, and I can tell nothing—because—I know nothing; when one knows nothing, it's all the same as if one had sworn to be silent. If you was to put me to the rack, you would not get a word out of me. Addio, it's time lost to both of us." Saying this, she hastily entered the garden, and

shut the gate. Renzo, bidding her good bye, turned back gently, lest at the noise of his footsteps she might be aware of the direction he was going in, but when he was out of her hearing, he quickened his steps, reached the door of Don Abbondio in a moment, entered the house, went straight to the room where he had left him, found him there, and went up to him with a bold air, and with fury in his eyes.

"Eh, what novelty is this?" said Don Abbondio.

"Who is that rich and powerful person," said Renzo with the voice of a man resolved to obtain a precise answer, "who is that rich and powerful person who will not permit me to espouse Lucia?"

"What? what? what?" stammered out the poor surprised man, with a countenance as white and as flabby as a piece of linen from the washtub. And continuing to stammer, he made a spring from his seat to gain the door. But Renzo who was prepared for such a movement, was upon the alert, got to the door before him, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

"Ah! ah! Mr. curate, will you speak now? Every body knows my affairs, except myself, and now I'll know them, per bacco, myself. What is his name?"

"Renzo, Renzo, for charity's sake, think of what you are doing! Don't endanger your soul."

"I think that I am determined to know it instantly, this very moment." And perhaps without being aware of it, as he finished, he laid his hand on the handle of the dagger, that stood out of his pocket.

"Mercy!" cried out Don Abbondio with a weak voice.

"I will know it."

"Who has told you?"

"No, no, no; no more talking. Speak out and quietly."

"Do you desire my death?"

"I am determined to know what I have a right to know."

"But if I tell, I am a dead man. Is my life of no consequence to me?"

"Then tell me."

These last words were uttered with so much energy, the countenance of Renzo became so menacing, that Don Abbondio could no longer suppose it possible for him to disobey.

"You promise me—you swear," said he, "to speak to no one, never to tell——?"

"I promise you, I will do a very extravagant thing, if you do not tell me this moment the name of him——"

At this new conjuration, Don Abbondio, with a countenance as much in agony, as if a dentist had his instrument in his mouth, articulated "Don——"

"Don," repeated Renzo, as if to aid his patient to get out the rest; stooping down with his ear near to the curate's mouth, his arms stretched out, and his fists clenched behind him.

"Don Rodrigo!" said he, with a compelled haste, devouring the syllables, and grinding the consonants, partly on account of his agitation, and partly because turning all the attention he was free to give, to a transaction to be consummated between two fears, he seemed as if he was desirous of utterly extinguishing the word, at the very moment he was forced to utter it.

"Ah, dog!" screamed out Renzo. "And what course has he taken—what has he told you to——?"

"How? eh! How?" replied Don Abbondio, with a somewhat reproachful tone; for having made so great a sacrifice, he felt that to a certain extent he was become creditor in the affair. "How? eh! I wish it had been brought to your door, as it has been brought to mine, who have nothing at all to do with it: certainly you would not have had so many whims in your head." And here, he began to paint in terrible colors, the fearful meeting he had had, and in relating it becoming more and more aware of the great indignation which was in him, and which until then had been hidden and kept under by his fears; and perceiving at the same time, that Renzo between vexation and confusion, remained immovable with his head down, he continued gaily, "a fine action you have committed, indeed, have not you? A fine service you have rendered me! A feat of this sort to your curate, in his own house! In a sacred place! A pretty transaction you have made of it! To bring my misfortune out of my own mouth! Your misfortune! What I was concealing from you, from prudence, for your good! And now that you know all about it, I should like to know what you will do for me! For the love of heaven! This is no joke. This is no affair of right and wrong, it is a matter of force. And this morning when I gave you good counsel—eh! all in a fury at once, I had prudence both for you and for me, but what is to be done? Open the door at least, give me my key."

"I may have erred," replied Renzo, with a more appeased tone, but in which his fury towards his discovered enemy was obvious, "I may have erred, but put your hand upon your heart, and reflect if in my case—"

Saying this, he drew the key from his pocket, and was going to unlock the door. Don Abbondio followed, and whilst Renzo was turning the key in the lock, he came to his side, and with a serious and anxious look, lifting to his eyes the three first fingers of his right hand, "Swear at least," said he.

"I may have erred, and pray excuse me," replied Renzo, opening the door and stepping outwards.

"Swear—" replied Don Abbondio, fastening on his arm with a trembling hand.

"I may have erred," repeated Renzo, freeing himself from his grasp, and going off in fury; thus cutting short the controversy, which, like many others in literature philosophy, and

the like, might have lasted a couple of ages, since each of the parties did nothing but reassert his own proposition.

"Perpetua! Perpetua!" cried out Don Abbondio, when he had in vain called after the fugitive. Perpetua did not answer, and Don Abbondio no longer knew where he was.

It has more than once happened to personages of greater importance than Don Abbondio, to find themselves in such painful embarrassments, in such incertitude about remedies, that it has appeared to them an excellent resource to go to bed with a fever. This resource Don Abbondio was not compelled to go and seek, for it came to him of itself. The fright of the preceding day, the sorrowful vigil of the past night, the apprehensions he had just gone through, and his dread of the future, produced their effect. Worn out and unnerved, he sank into his large chair, and feeling a cold creeping in his bones, he looked at his nails, sighing, and calling out from time to time, with a tremulous and fretful voice, "Perpetua!"

She arrived at last, with a large cabbage under her arm, and with an unconcerned face, as if nothing was the matter. The reader will be spared the lamentations, the condolences, the accusations, the defences, the "you alone could have told him," and the "I have told him nothing," and all the confusion of such a colloquy. Let it suffice to know, that Don Abbondio directed Perpetua to make the door as fast as she could, not to set her foot there any more; and if any one should knock, to answer from the window, that the curate was laid up with a fever. Slowly he went up stairs, saying at every third step, "I've got it now," and went really to bed, where we will leave him.

Renzo, in the mean time, went with an agitated step homewards, without having determined what he ought to do, but with a frenzied inclination to do something strange and terrible. Evil doers and fraudulent men, all who in any manner do an injury to others, are responsible not only for the injustice they themselves commit, but for the rash actions to which they provoke those whom they offend. Renzo was a pacific young man, averse to the shedding of blood, a frank youth holding snares of every kind in abhorrence; but at that moment his heart was throbbing with the desire to commit homicide, and his mind occupied solely in contriving treachery. He would have gone to the residence of Don Rodrigo, would have seized him by the throat, and——but he remembered that it was a kind of fortress, filled with Bravos within, and guarded without; that none but friends and servants well known had free entrance, without being minutely examined from head to foot: that an unknown artizan could not put his foot there without a strict investigation, and that he above all—he perhaps would be too well known. He then fancied himself taking his arquebuss, concealing himself behind a hedge, watching there, if he should ever come that way alone; and, exciting his imagination with ferocious pleasure, he figured to himself an approaching footstep, and the individual quietly raising up his head: he recognizes the villanous wretch, presents his piece, takes aim, fires, sees him fall and give the last shudder, flings him a malediction, and flies beyond the borders, to put himself in safety.

And Lucia? Scarce did this word cross the path of these dishonest fancies, when the purer thoughts to which Renzo's mind was accustomed, crowded in upon him. His last recollections of his parents flashed upon him; he thought of God, of the Virgin, and the Saints; he thought of the consolations he had so often experienced at feeling unconscious of crime, at the horror he had so often experienced at the news of a homicide; and he awoke from that dream of blood, with dread, with remorse, together with a kind of joy that it was nothing but imagination. But the thought of Lucia! How many thoughts did not that bring with it? So many hopes, so many promises, such an enchanting future, deemed too so certain, and the day so long sighed for! And then how, with what language to announce to her such information? And what course to adopt? How to make her his own, against the power of that wicked man? Together with all this, was mingled, not suspicion that had taken any form, but a tormenting cloud that passed across his mind each instant. This villany of Don Rodrigo could proceed from no other cause but a brutal passion for Lucia. And Lucia? That she should have held out any encouragement, or have been wanting in the slightest propriety, was a thought that his mind could not harbor for an instant. But did she know any thing of it? Could he have conceived his infamous passion without her being aware of it? Would he have carried things to such an extremity, before he had approached her in any degree? Lucia had never said a word to him about it, her betrothed husband.

Under the influence of these thoughts, he passed through the village, in the centre of which his own house stood, and went to Lucia's, which was at the other extremity. The cottage had a small court before it, which separated it from the street, and was surrounded by a low wall. Renzo walked into the courtyard, and heard a mingled and continuous clamor which proceeded from an upper chamber. Supposing that some friends and gossips were come to pay their court to Lucia, he thought it best not to join them, with such intelligence as he bore, both in his person and countenance. A young girl, who was in the court, ran towards him, crying out "the bridegroom! the bridegroom!"

"Hush, Bettina, hush!" said Renzo, "come here; go up stairs to Lucia, take her aside, and whisper in her ear—so that no one may hear you, or suspect any thing—go, tell her I want to speak to her, that I am waiting for her in

the lower room and that she must come directly. The little girl ran up stairs in great haste, delighted and proud at having a secret embassy to execute.

Lucia at that moment had come out of her mother's hands, attired for the occasion. The women were snatching the bride from each other, and pulling her about that they might look at her, whilst she was defending herself with a sort of amazonian modesty from the good rustics; shielding her face with her elbow, hiding it in her bosom, and drawing into a pretended frown her long and black eyebrows, whilst a smile was resting on her mouth. Her dark and youthful locks parted in front by a white and narrow seam, were gathered behind into multiplied circular tresses, fastened by long pins of silver, arranged around into the form of the rays of an aureole or glory, as they are yet worn by the country maidens of the Milanese. Around her neck she had a collar of garnets alternating with buttons of gold filagree; her waist was a brocade embroidered with flowers, with the sleeves divided and tied in knots of handsome ribbons; she wore a short petticoat of a worked silk, with numerous and minute folds, a pair of vermilion stockings, and silk embroidered shoes. Besides these, which were peculiar to nuptial occasions, Lucia had a great share of modest beauty, now enhanced and made more expressive through the various feelings depicted on her countenance: joy tempered by a slight agitation, that placid sort of reluctance which now and then appears on the countenance of a bride, and which without discomposing beauty, communicates a particular and interesting character to it.

Little Bettina got into the crowd, drew near to Lucia, and with great address making her understand she had something to communicate to her, whispered into her ear.

"I am going for a moment, and will return," said Lucia to the women, and went down stairs in haste. On perceiving the altered countenance and demeanor of Renzo, "What has happened?" said she, not without a presentiment of terror.

"Lucia!" answered Renzo, "all our preparations go for nothing, and God knows when we can be husband and wife."

"What?" said Lucia, quite dismayed. Renzo related to her briefly the occurrences of the morning; she listened to him with anguish, and when she heard the name of Don Rodrigo, "Ah!" she exclaimed, blushing and trembling, "has he gone to this length?"

"Then you knew something—?" said Renzo.

"Too much!" she answered, "but to go this length!"

"What did you know?"

"Don't make me tell now, don't make me cry. I will run and call my mother, and send all the women away; we must be alone."

Whilst she was going, Renzo murmured, "You never told me any thing—."

"Ah, Renzo!" replied Lucia, turning round, but without stopping. Renzo perfectly understood that his name uttered at that moment, with that tone, was as expressive as if she had said—can you doubt that my silence has proceeded from any but just and pure motives? In the mean time, the good Agnes—the name of Lucia's mother—both suspicious and curious at the little girl's whispering to her, and her disappearance, went down stairs to know the cause. Her daughter left her with Renzo, returned to the assembled women, and composing her features and voice as well as she could, said, "The curate is sick, and there will be nothing done to day." Having said this, she saluted them in haste, and went down stairs again.

The women filed off, and scattered themselves to relate what had happened, and to ascertain if Don Abbondio was in reality unwell. The verification of the fact cut off all the conjectures that already began to work in their heads, and to announce themselves in broken and mysterious phrases.

CHAPTER III.

Lucia entered the room on the ground floor, where Renzo in great distress was telling Agnes what she was in great anguish listening to. Both of them turned to one who knew more than either of them, and from whom they waited for an explanation which could not but be painful; and both of them amidst their unhappiness, and with the different kind of affection that they bore to Lucia, suffering a different kind of displeasure to appear, because she had concealed any thing from them, and especially a matter of this kind. Agnes, although anxious to hear her daughter, could not restrain herself from reproaching her "not to tell your own mother such an affair as this!"

"I'll tell you every thing now," answered Lucia, wiping her eyes with her apron.

"Speak out, speak out, speak, speak!" exclaimed at once both her mother and her lover.

"Holy virgin!" exclaimed Lucia, "who would have believed that things could have been carried so far as this." And then, with a voice broken by sobs, she related how, a few days before, returning from the filature, a little behind her companions, Don Rodrigo in company with another gentleman passed her on the road; that he tried to draw her into a conversation, not over and above proper, she said, but without giving him any encouragement, she quickened her steps and joined her companions; in the meantime she heard the other cavalier laugh aloud, and Don Rodrigo say, "Well, let us wager?" They next day they were again in the road, but Lucia was in the midst of her companions with her eyes bent to

the ground, and the gentleman giggled, and Don Rodrigo said, "We'll see, We'll see!"

By the blessing of Providence, continued Lucia, "that day was the last of the filature. I immediately told——"

"Who did you tell it to?" asked Agnes, going close up to her, not without a little temper, at finding there was a preferred confidant.

"To father Christopher, in confession, mamma," answered Lucia, with a gentle excusing voice, "I told him every thing the last time we went together to the church of the convent, and if you remember, that morning I first began with one thing, and then with another, to delay until other country people should be passing the same road, that we might have company; for after that meeting I was afraid to be in the road——"

At the revered name of father Christopher, the anger of Agnes was appeased. "You did right," said she, "but why not tell your own mother also?"

Lucia had had two excellent reasons for her silence; one was, that she might neither frighten the good lady, nor make her unhappy about an affair she had no remedy for; and the other was, that she did not like to run the risk of putting a story on its travels through so many mouths, which ought to be most jealously buried in her own bosom; besides, too, she hoped that her marriage would at once nave put an end to such a detestable persecution. Of these two reasons, she only gave her mother the first.

"And to you," she then said, turning to Renzo, with that tone which convinces a friend he has been in the wrong, "and was it right for me to tell you all this? You know it too well now to my sorrow."

"And what did the father tell you?" asked Agnes.

"He told me to hasten my marriage as much as I could, and in the meantime to keep close in the house. He told me too to pray to God, and that he hoped that Don Rodrigo not seeing me any more, would forget me. And then it was that I did violence to myself," pursued she, turning again to Renzo, without however raising her eyes to his face, and blushing all over, "then it was I put aside shame, and asked you to have our marriage celebrated as soon as possible, and before the time we had fixed on. I don't know what you may have thought of me! But I did it for the best, I was advised to it, and I thought certainly—and this morning I was far from thinking——" Here Lucia's words were drowned in a flood of tears.

"Ah villain, scoundrel, assassin!" exclaimed Renzo, striding up and down the room, and grasping from time to time the handle of his dagger.

"Oh, what a perplexity, for the love of God!" said Agnes. The youth suddenly stopped before the weeping Lucia, looked at her with tenderness, grief, and rage, and said, "this is the last time that assassin——"

"Ah, no, Renzo, for the love of heaven!" cried out Lucia. "No, no, for the love of heaven, there is a God also for the poor, and how can we expect him to aid us, if we do evil?"

"No, no, for the love of heaven," repeated Agnes.

"Renzo," said Lucia with a look of hope, and an appearance of tranquil resolution, "you have a trade, and I know how to work, let us go so far off, that he may never hear us spoken of again."

"Ah Lucia, and then? We are not yet man and wife! Will the curate give us a certificate of our being free from all other engagements? That man? If we were married, ay, then——"

Lucia began to weep again, and all three remained in silence, rendered mute by a consternation, which presented a sorrowful contrast to the festive bravery of their garments.

"Listen, my children, give attention to me," said Agnes after a moment or two, "I came into the world before you, and I know it a little. It is best not to alarm ourselves too much, the devil himself is not as ugly as they paint him. To us poor people, the skeins always appear the more raveled, because we don't know how to look for the end of the thread; but sometimes an opinion, a word from a man who has studied—I know what I mean to say. Follow my plan, Renzo, go to Lecco, seek out Doctor Azzecca-garbugli,* tell him—but don't call him so for the love of heaven, for it is a nick name—you must call him signor doctor—how is it he calls himself? Oh tut, tut, tut, what is his true name? every body calls him by his nick name. Never mind, find that tall, dry, skinny doctor, with a red nose, and a raspberry mark on his cheek."

"I know him by sight," said Renzo.

"Well," continued Agnes, that's the man for your business! I have seen more than one, in as great trouble as a hen with one chicken, and who did not know where to lay their heads, and after remaining an hour playing at four eyes with Doctor Azzecca-garbugli—mind you don't call him so—I have seen them, I say, laugh at their troubles. Take those four capons, poor things! I intended to have wrung their necks for the feast this evening—and carry them to him,—for you must never go empty handed to gentry of that kind; tell him what has happened, and you will see that he will tell you on his two feet, things that would not come into our heads if we were to think of it for twelvemonths.

Renzo very willingly embraced this advice. Lucia approved it, and Agnes proud of having given it, dragged one by one the poor animals out, put their eight legs together as if she was making a bunch of flowers, twisted and tied them with a piece of string, and put them into Renzo's hands; who, having given and received words of comfort, went out by a little garden door, whence the boys could not see him,

* Strike-trouble.

and who would have run after him, crying out, "the bridegroom, the bridegroom." Thus crossing the fields, or as they say there, the places,* he went by the paths, fretting, thinking of his misfortune, and ruminating over what he should say to Doctor Azzecca-garbugli. I leave the reader to imagine what sort of a journey the poor capons must have had, tied in a bunch, held by the heels, and their heads dangling down, in the hand of a man agitated by so many passions; the thoughts which tumultuously passed through his mind he accompanied with gestures, and at certain moments of anger, resolution, or despair, extending out his arm with great force, he gave them such terrible jerks, and made their suspended noddles dance about so, that they had no comfort but what they found in pecking at one another, a thing that often happens to companions in misfortune.

Arrived at Lecco, he inquired for the residence of the doctor, and being informed, he went there. At his entrance he felt himself assailed by that timidity which poor illiterate people experience, when about to approach the gentry and the learned. He forgot all the arguments he had prepared, but giving a look at his capons, he felt encouraged. Entering the kitchen, he inquired of the kitchen wench if he could speak with the doctor. At the sight of the capons, the girl, like one accustomed to see such presents brought, wanted to take them, but Renzo kept drawing back, for he wished the doctor to see and to know that he had brought something with him.—The doctor himself happened to come in, just as the wench was saying "Give them to me," and passed on to the study. Renzo made the doctor a bow, who received him graciously with "Come, my son," and took him to the study. This was a large room, with three of its walls covered with pictures of the twelve Cesars, and the fourth filled with shelves of old and dusty books: in the centre, was a table loaded with law papers, allegations, supplications, libels, and proclamations, with three or four seats around it; and on one of the sides was a huge arm chair, with a high and square back, terminated at the corners by two ornaments of wood, standing up something like horns, with large bosses, and covered with leather. Some of these from age were broken and had fallen off, leaving the edges of their covering, sticking and curling out here and there. The doctor himself had his chamber gown on, that is, he was covered with a black and blue sort of Toga, which in old times had served him to perorate in upon grand occasions, when he went to Milan to conduct some great cause. He shut the door, and encourged the youth with these words "Well, my son, what is your case?" "I want to say something to you in confidence."

"Here I am," replied the doctor, "speak;" and he seated himself in his arm chair. Renzo, standing straight up at the table, and twirling round with his right hand, his hat which was on his left, began, "I wish to know from your worship, who has studied—"

"Tell me the fact, just as it is," the doctor interrupted.

"Your worship must excuse me, signor, doctor; we poor people don't understand how to talk well. I want to know, then———"

"What a blessed set! You are all so—instead of telling your case, you begin by interrogations, because you have got your own plans already in your heads."

"Excuse me, signor doctor, I want to know if when any one threatens a curate to prevent his performing a marriage, whether there is any penalty." Ho, ho! I comprehend (said the doctor to himself, though in truth he had not yet comprehended) I comprehend, and then assuming a serious air, but a seriousness blended with compassion and eagerness, he compressed his lips together strongly, and gave out inarticulate sounds expressive of his feelings, but which he more clearly explained by soon saying "A serious case, my son, a case already contemplated. You have done well to come to me. It is a clear case, provided for in a hundred public decrees, and—see here, in a decree of last year, of our present governor. I'll show it to you this moment, you shall see it and have it in your hand."

Thus saying, he rose from his arm chair, and thrusting his hand into the chaos of papers before him, he tumbled and threw them about from top to bottom, as if he was throwing corn into a half bushel.

"Where the deuce—Lets see here, let's see here. Always so many, many things on my hands! but it must be here, certainly, a decree of such importance. Ah! here, here." He took it, looked at the date, and putting on a still more serious air, exclaimed the 15th of October, 1627! Surely, it is last year, one of the new decrees, people are more frightened at them than at the others. Can you read, my son."

"A little, signor doctor."

"Well, then, follow me with your eye, and you will see." And holding out the document at its full length, he began to read, rapidly muttering over some passages, and distinctly and with great expression enunciating others, according to their importance. "'As, by the proclamation published by order of the Duke of Feria the 14th December, 1620, and confirmed by the most illustrious and most excellent signor, the Signor Gonzalo Fernandez di Cordova,' et cetera, 'extraordinary and rigorous remedies were provided against the oppressions, exactions, and tyrannical acts which by the audacity of some persons, are committed against the devoted vassals of his majesty; in every manner the frequency and the maliciousness of the excesses,' et cetera, 'have increased to such a degree, that his excellency feels himself under the necessity,'

* I luoghi.

et cetera. 'For which reasons, with the concurrence of the senate and of the council,' et cetera, 'it has been resolved to publish the present decree.'

'And beginning by the tyrannical acts, experience having shown that many, as well in the cities as in the country towns,' do you hear? 'of this state, exercise in a tyrannical way, exactions, and oppress the weak in various modes, forcing them with violence, to enter into various contracts for purchases, leases,' et cetera. Why, where are you? there, there, listen! forcing them to enter upon, or to break off marriages, eh!"

"That is my case," said Renzo.

"Hear, hear, there is still more, and then we will see the penalty.—'Shall give evidence, or not give evidence, that any one leaves the place he inhabits,' et cetera; 'if such a one pays his debt, the other shall not molest him, but he may go to his mill.' All this has nothing to do with our affair. Ah, here we are—'that priest not doing what by his office he is obliged to do, or doing things it is not his duty to do.' Eh?"

"It seems as if this decree was made expressly for my case."

"Eh? is it not so? Hear, hear, 'and other similar violences, practiced by feudatories, noblemen, persons of the middling classes, low men, and plebeians.' None of them are left out, there they all are, as if it was the valley of Jehoshaphat. Now listen to the penalty. 'All these, and other similar evil actions, although already prohibited, nevertheless, it being necessary to apply greater rigor, His Excellency, by the present, not derogating,'—et cetera; 'orders and commands, that against all offenders of every condition, in the above matters, or any similar matter, proceedings be instituted by all the ordinary magistrates of the state, and that they be punished by pecuniary fines, corporal punishment, banishment to the galleys, and even by death itself.' A trifle to be sure! 'At the pleasure of His Excellency, or of the senate, according to the nature of the case, the persons, and the circumstances. And this ir-re-miss-ibly and with every rigor,' et cetera. There is some stuff in this; eh? See here the signatures, 'Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova,' and lower down, 'Platonus,' and here again, 'Vidit Ferrer;' there is nothing wanting."

Whilst the doctor was reading, Renzo followed him slowly with his eyes, endeavoring to find out the true construction, and to see those blessed words that were to be his aid and refuge. The doctor perceiving his new client was more attentive than frightened, was surprised. Has this chap been matriculated? said he to himself. "Ah, ah, you've had your tuft shaved off, have you? You've done prudently, but there is no occasion for that when you put yourself into my hands. The case is a serious one, but you don't know what I am capable of doing upon an emergency."

To understand better this blunder of the doctor's, it is necessary to know that in those times the Bravos by trade, and the infamous of every kind, used to wear a long tuft of hair, which they could draw over their faces like a visor, when they were assaulting any one, that is, in enterprizes requiring caution as well as strength, where some disguise was necessary. The decrees are not silent upon this custom. "His Excellency commands (the Marquis of Hinojosa,) that whoever wears his hair of such a length that it shall cover his forehead, including his eye-brows, or shall wear it in locks either before or behind his ears, shall incur a fine of three hundred crowns; and if he is unable to pay the fine, shall be sent to the galleys for three years, for the first offence, and for the second, a still greater fine, both pecuniary and corporal, at the pleasure of His Excellency."

"It is permitted nevertheless, that those who are bald, or who have any scars or marks on their heads, or other reasonable cause, may for appearance's sake, or on account of their health, wear their hair of such a length, as may be necessary to conceal such defects, and for nothing more; warning them, however, not to exceed what the necessity of the case may exact, lest they incur the punishment intended for the specified offenders."

"And in like manner, all barbers, under the penalty of a hundred crowns, or of three turns of the rack, to be given to them in public, and even greater corporal punishment, at pleasure, as above; are commanded not to leave upon any whom they dress, shave or cut, locks, tufts, crests, or hair longer than usual, as well in front, as on the sides, and behind the ears; but that all be left even, as on the top, except in cases of baldness, or defects alluded to." The tuft then was almost a characteristic part of the armor of the bullies and hang-gallows' of the day, and from it they got, commonly to be called ciuffi.* This term has remained, and is still in use in the dialect, in a more mitigated sense; and perhaps there is not one of our Milanese readers who does not remember when he was a child, to have heard his father, or his master, or a servant, or some friend of the house, say, there goes a ciuffo, or tuft boy, there goes a ciuffetto!

"Truly, on the word of a poor young fellow," answered Renzo, "I have never worn a tuft in the course of my life."

"We shall make nothing of it," replied the doctor, shaking his head, with a smile of malicious impatience, "if you don't trust me, we shall make nothing of it. Look ye, my son, he who tells lies to the doctor, is a fool that will tell the truth to the judge. The lawyer must be told things as clear as the day; his business is afterwards to muddle them as dark as night. If you want me to aid you, you must begin with A, and go on to Z, with your heart in your hand, as you would to your confessor. You should tell me the name of the person who

* Tuft boys.

employed you to threaten the curate, no doubt he is a person of some consequence; and in that case I should go to see him as an act of duty. I should not tell him, look you, that I know from you, that he sent you to the curate, you may trust me. I shall tell him, that I come to implore his protection for a poor calumniated youth. And with him I shall take proper measures to finish the affair in a suitable manner. Understand well, that in saving himself, he would save you. And if the affair is entirely your own, I shall not flinch—I have got others out of worse scrapes—provided always you have not offended any person of consequence—let us understand each other—I engage to bring you out of this difficulty—with some little expense—let us understand each other. You should tell me who is the offended person, as they say; and next the condition, the quality, and the temper of your friend; we shall then see whether it will be better to try to keep him right as to the matter of protection, or to serve him with some criminal process, and stick a flea in his ear: for, d'ye see, when these decrees are rightly managed, no one is guilty, no one is innocent. As to the curate, if he is a man of judgment, he will keep quiet, and if he is rash enough not to do so, we have remedies for that too. All sorts of difficulties have their doors to get out of, but it requires a man to find them! Your case is a serious one, I tell you, a serious one, a serious one indeed; the proclamation does not mince matters, and if the matter is to be decided between you and justice, with nothing but four eyes, you are in for it. I talk to you as a friend, all these pranks must be paid for—if you mean to get free of this in a smooth way, money and sincerity, confidence in those who wish you well, obedience, and submitting to do every thing that may be suggested to you."

Whilst the doctor was pouring out all this strange matter, Renzo stood looking at him with that kind of estatic attention which a clown, in the public square, gives to the juggler, who, cramming his mouth with tow, keeps drawing ribbons out, that never end. When, however, he had well comprehended what the doctor meant, and the mistake he had fallen into, he cut the ribbon short, that was coming out of his mouth, with these words, "Oh, doctor! why, how you have mistaken it? The case is just the other way. I have threatened no one—I dont't follow such employments; ask every one in my parish, and they will tell you I have never had any thing to do with the law. The villany has been done to me, and I am come to you to know how I am to obtain justice; right glad I am to have seen that decree."

"The devil!" exclaimed the doctor, opening his eyes quite wide. "Why, what a hodge-podge you have made of it! So it is; are you all alike? is it possible you can't relate things clearly?"

"But, signor doctor, excuse me—you did not give me time to do so; now I'll tell you the thing, how it really is. Know then, that I was to have been married to-day," and here Renzo's voice faltered—"I was to have been married to-day to a young woman, to whom I was engaged ever since the summer; and to-day, as I tell you, was the day fixed with the curate, and every thing was prepared. Well, then, the curate begins to make I don't know what excuses; well, not to be tedious, I made him confess, as was just; and he told me he was prohibited, under pain of his life, from marrying us. That powerful, overbearing Don Rodrigo——"

"Hoy, hoy!" interrupted the doctor immediately, frowning with his eye-brows, drawing his red nose up into wrinkles, and twisting his mouth, "hoy, hoy, why do you come here to trouble and plague me with these idle stories? Talk amongst yourselves about such things; you don't know how to deal out your words; and don't come here to spend them with an honest man, who knows what his own are worth to him. Be off, be off, you don't know what you are talking about; I've nothing to do with boy's affairs; I can listen to nothing of the kind—words in air, words in air."

"I swear——"

"Go, go, I tell you, what have I to do with your swearing? I am not concerned in it; I wash my hands of it;" and he began to rub them, and turn them one over the other, as if he were really washing them. "Learn how to speak; this is not the way to come and surprise a respectable man."

"But hear me, hear me," in vain cried out Renzo; the doctor always bawling out, and pushing him with his hands towards the door. No sooner had he got him out, than he opened it again, and called out to the wench, "give that man back again, directly, what he brought; I won't have any thing—I won't have any thing." The woman, who during the whole time she had been in the house, had never executed an order of that kind, hearing it issued in such a peremptory tone, did not hesitate to obey. She took the four poor birds, and gave them to Renzo, with a look of scornful compassion, that seemed to say, "you must have made a prodigious blunder, to be sure." Renzo wanted to renew their understanding, but the doctor was inflexible; and astonished, and but half awake, and more irritated than ever, he was obliged to receive back the rejected victims, and to depart, bending his steps to the village, to communicate to the females the result of his expedition.

These, after his departure, had sorrowfully changed the nuptial dresses into their accustomed daily and homely garments, and began again to consult upon their affairs; Lucia sobbing, and Agnes sighing. When this last had expatiated upon the great effects which might be expected from the counsels of the doctor, Lucia said, that it would be well to try and help themselves in every possible way; that father Christopher was a man not only to

give advice, but to lend his assistance, when poor people were to be protected; and that it would be a famous good thing to make him acquainted with what had happened. "You are right," said Agnes, and they began to consider how it could be done, for as to their going to the convent, which was at least two miles off, that was not an undertaking for them to risk that day, and certainly no discreet person would have advised them to it. But whilst they were hesitating about it, they heard a knock at the door, and at the same moment, a low but distinct *Deo gratias*. Lucia, wondering who it could be, ran to open the door, and making his bow, in came a secular perquisitor Capuchin friar, with his wallet depending from his left shoulder, and holding the mouth tightly twisted in both his hands on his breast. "Oh, Fra Galdino!" said the two women. "The Lord be with you," said the friar, "I am come for your part of the perquisition of nuts."

"Go and get the nuts for the fathers," said Agnes. Lucia rose, and went to another room, but before she entered, she stood up behind Fra Galdino's shoulders, who remained in the same place, and putting her forefinger on her mouth, she gave a sign to her mother to keep the secret, in a tender, and supplicating, but also in an authoritative way.

The perquisitor, leering at Agnes from a distance, said, "and this marriage? it was to have taken place to-day. I have found a sort of confusion in the village, as if there was some novelty going on. What has happened?"

"The curate is sick, and we are obliged to put it off," she answered in haste. If Lucia had not warned her, the answer would probably have been different. "And how does the perquisition go on?" said she, to change the conversation.

"Not very well, good woman, not very well. They are all here;" and saying this, he took the wallet from his shoulders, and danced it up between his hands—"they are all here; and to collect this prodigious abundance, I have had to knock at ten doors."

"Ay, it is a scarce year, Fra Galdino; and when one has to contend for bread, all measures are small."

"And to bring good times back, what remedy is there, good woman? Alms! Do you know about that miracle of the walnuts, that took place a great many years ago, in that convent of ours in Romagna?"

"No, indeed; tell it to me directly."

"Oh! you must know then, that in that convent, there was a father of our order, who was a saint, and his name was father Macario. One winter's day, walking in a path in a field of a benefactor of ours, a very excellent man also, father Macario saw our benefactor standing near a great walnut tree belonging to him, and four countrymen, with their pickaxes lifted up, and digging away, to uncover the tree, and lay bare the roots. 'What are you doing to that poor tree?' asked father Macario. 'Why, father, for some years past it has borne no walnuts, and I am going to make firewood of it.' 'Don't do so; leave it alone,' said the father; 'know that this year it shall bear more nuts than leaves.' The benefactor, who knew who the man was that said this, immediately ordered the laboring men to cover up the roots again with the earth; and, calling to the father, who continued his walk, 'father Macario,' said he, 'one half of the crop shall be kept for the convent.' The report of the prediction went abroad, and every body went to look at the walnut tree. In fact, when spring came, it blossomed prodigiously, and then nuts, and nuts without end. The good benefactor had not the consolation to have the shaking of them down, because, before the harvest, he was taken away to receive the reward of his charity. But the miracle was the more astonishing for that very reason, as you shall hear. That excellent man left behind him a son of very different character. At harvest time then, the perquisitor went to receive the half that belonged to the convent; but he pretended to know nothing about it, and had the impudence to reply that he had never heard the Capuchins knew how to make walnuts. Now what do you think happened? One day, (listen to this) the hang-gallows had invited some friends of the same kidney, and whilst they were making merry, he told them this story about the walnuts, and made game of the friars; and, as the young dogs wanted to see such an interminable heap of nuts, he took them to the granary. And what do you think? he opens the door, goes to the corner where this monstrous heap was laid, and whilst he was saying—look there—he looked himself, and saw—what? a fine heap of dry walnut leaves! What do you think of that for a miracle, eh? and the convent, instead of being a loser by this refused alms, was a gainer; because, after such a surprising fact, the perquisition for nuts produced such prodigious quantities, that a benefactor, moved with compassion for the poor perquisitor, had the charity to present the convent with an ass, to assist him to carry the nuts home. And there was so much oil made, that the poor came and received as much as they wanted; for we are like the sea, which receives water from all quarters, and distributes it back again to all the rivers.

Here Lucia came back with her apron so filled with walnuts, that she could scarce carry them, holding the two ends up with her arms quite stretched out. Whilst Fra Galdino, taking his wallet from his neck, put it on the ground and opened the mouth to introduce into it this abundant alms, the mother gave an astonished and severe look at Lucia on account of her prodigality; but Lucia gave her another, which meant—I'll explain to you why. Fra Galdino broke out into eulogiums, auguries, promises, and many thanks, and having replaced his wallet, was going away. But Lucia stayed him to say, "I want you to

do me a service, it is to tell father Christopher that I desire to speak to him very much, and that I entreat him to have the charity to come to us poor people, immediately—as soon as he can, for it is impossible for me to come to the church myself."

"Is that all? An hour shan't pass over before father Christopher shall be made acquainted with your wishes."

"I rely upon you!"

"Don't doubt it at all;" and having said this, he took his departure, more crooked and more content than when he came.

Now no one must think that because we find a poor young girl sending for father Christopher with so much confidence, and a perquisitor accepting the commission without witnessing any surprise, or without any difficulty, that the said Christopher was one of those friars as they are by the dozen, a thing to be despised. On the contrary, he was a man of much authority amongst his brethren, and in the neighborhood; but such was the condition of the capuchins, that nothing to them appeared too low, or too high. To be of service to the vilest, and to be served by the most powerful, to enter into palaces and into cabins with the same air of humility and security, to be at times in the same house, the subject of pastime, and a personage without whom nothing could be decided, to seek alms every where, and distribute them to every body who came to the convent, a capuchin was accustomed to every thing. Whilst journeying, it might occur to them to meet a prince who reverently would kiss the end of their cordon, or with a pack of noisy boys, who pretending to be at variance with them, would throw dirt upon their beards. The word friar, in those times, was uttered with the most profound respect, and with the bitterest contempt: and the capuchins, perhaps more than any other order, were objects of the two opposing feelings, and experienced the two opposite fortunes; for possessing nothing, wearing a habit more singularly differing from the ordinary one, making a more open profession of humility, they exposed themselves in a nearer degree to the veneration and contempt, that such faculties may inspire, from the different humors, and the different ways of thinking of men.

Fra Galdino being gone, "All those walnuts!" exclaimed Agnes, "in such a year as this."

"Pardon me, mamma," replied Lucia, "but if we had given alms like the rest, Fra Galdino would have had to wander about heaven knows how long, before he had got his wallet full. God knows when he would have got back to the convent, and what with gossiping here, and listening to long stories there, it is a chance if he would have remembered a word of——"

"Right, it was well thought of, and then besides it is all charity, and that always produces good fruit," said Agnes, who with her defects was a good woman, and would have endured any thing, for this her only daughter, in whom she had placed all her delight.

Meantime Renzo arrived, and entering with his countenance full of anger and shame at the same time, he threw the capons upon a table, and this was the last of the turbulent adventures of the poor creatures for that day.

"Fine counsel you gave me," said he to Agnes. "You have sent me to a very respectable man indeed, to one who truly likes to assist poor people." And immediately he narrated to her his conference with the doctor. Stupefied at such a miserable result, she wanted to make out nevertheless that the advice was good, and that Renzo must have failed in doing things the right way; but Lucia interrupted the dispute, announcing to him that she hoped she had found better aid. Renzo embraced this hope, as they always do who are in misfortune and difficulty. "But if the father," said he, "finds no remedy, I will find one in some mode or another." The women advised peace, patience and prudence.

"Tomorrow," said Lucia, "father Christopher will certainly come; and you will see that he will find out some expedient, which we poor people can't imagine to ourselves."

"I hope so," said Renzo, "but in any event, I shall know how to right myself, and to cause justice to be done to me. There is justice finally for this world!"

With these sorrowful colloquies, and with the goings and returnings we have noticed, the day passed over, and was now sinking into the shades of evening.

"Good night," said Lucia sorrowfully to Renzo, who could not muster resolution enough to depart.

"Good night!" he replied, still more affected.

"Some saint will assist us," she replied; "be prudent, and be resigned."

The mother added other advice of the same kind, and the bridegroom left the house with a tempest in his heart, always repeating those strange words, "there is justice finally for this world!" So true it is, that a man overcome by great grief, no longer knows what he says.

CHAPTER IV.

The sun had not yet appeared above the horizon, when father Christopher left his convent of Pescarenico, to go up to the cottage where he was expected. Pescarenico is a small place on the banks of the Adda, or rather of the lake, a few paces below the bridge; consisting of a group of houses, inhabited chiefly by fishermen, and adorned here and there with all sorts of nets spread out to dry. The convent was situated (and the building yet exists) out of the village, and in front of the entrance to it; the road which leads from Lecco to Ber-

gamo being between. The sky was serene. As the sun gradually arose from behind the mountain, his beams could be traced, rapidly descending from the summits of the opposite heights, and spreading themselves below, amongst the declivities, and in the valley. An autumnal breeze, detaching the withered leaves from the boughs of the mulberry, wafted them on to drop a few paces from the tree. In the vineyards to the right and to the left, the yet extended branches presented all the brilliancy of a foliage, rich in diversified tints and hues; and the recently worked threshing floors, appeared brown and distinct, amongst the fields of pale-colored stubble glistening with dew. It was a glad scene, and the human figure alone, wherever it was seen moving, tinctured both the aspect and the feeling, with sadness. At every step, lean and ragged beggars were met, grown old in their trade, or compelled by necessity to extend their hands. They passed by the side of father Christopher in silence, looking him pitifully in the face, and although they had nothing to hope from him—since capuchins never possess money—they made him a reverence of gratitude for the alms which they had received, and which they were again going to seek at the convent. The spectacle of the laborers dispersed in the fields had something, I know not what, still more painful about it. Some of them were casting their seeds, thin, sparingly, and with reluctance, like one who is hazarding something very valuable: others were unwillingly handling their shovels, and carelessly throwing about the clods with them. The famished girl, holding the lean and dried up cow in the pasture by a cord, looking anxiously round, and stooping down in haste to snatch from her, as food for her own family, some herb, which hunger had taught her would aid to sustain life. At every step such spectacles increased the sadness of the friar, who pursued his road with the melancholy presentiment at heart, that he was going to be made acquainted with some new disaster.

But why was he so solicitous about Lucia? And why at the first notice did he put himself so anxiously in motion, as if he had been summoned by an order of the provincial father? And who was this father Christopher? We must satisfy all these inquiries.

Father Christopher was a man nearer to sixty than fifty years old. His shaved head, with the exception of a small band of hair, that cinctured it midway in the form of a crown, according to the custom of the capuchins, was lifted up from time to time with a movement that disclosed something of a lofty and unquiet feeling, although soon sinking down again from a sense of humility. The grey and long beard which covered his cheeks and his chin, threw into greater relief the prominent features of the upper part of his face, to which an abstinence of long habit, had communicated infinitely more gravity than it had robbed of expression. His two sunken eyes were usually cast to the ground, but at times they lighted up with a sudden vivacity, like two freakish horses, driven by a coachman they well know is not to be mastered, but now and then giving a few capers they are sure to pay for by a strong pull at the bit.

Father Christopher had not always been thus, and indeed he had not always been Christopher, for his baptismal name was Ludovico. He was the son of a tradesman of ——, who towards the close of his life, finding himself in possession of a good fortune, and having only one son, had renounced all business, and led the life of a gentleman.

In this new indolence, he became ashamed of all that period of his life which he had passed in any of the occupations of the world, and, governed by this feeling, he took great pains to obliterate every resemblance that he had been engaged in trade. He would fain even have forgotten it himself, but the warehouse, the bales, the ledger, the yardwand, rose before him, like the ghost of Banquo to Macbeth, even amidst the ostentation of the feast, and the flattery of his parasites. Great were the pains taken by those miserable creatures, to avoid every allusion that could possibly have any bearing upon the former condition of their host. One day, just to relate a particular instance, towards the end of the dinner, at a moment of the most lively and free merriment, when it would have been difficult to decide who was the happiest, those who despatched the good things, or those who provided them; the host was encouraging, with a friendly sort of authority, one of the guests, who was the fairest and most honest gourmand imaginable. This person, without the least malice in the world, and with the frankness of a child, to help along the joke, answered "my ears are as quick as a shopkeepers." He was not slow at perceiving the force of the words he had uttered, and looked doubtingly at his host, whose face suddenly became dark; both of them tried to rally, but it was no longer in their power. Each of the other guests began to consider how he might mitigate this awkward blunder, and divert attention from it, but whilst they were considering they were silent, and this silence made the scandal still more manifest. Every one avoided the eyes of the rest, and was sensible that all were occupied with the thought they all were desirous of concealing. The mirth for that day was at an end, and the poor imprudent, or to speak plainer, unfortunate fellow, received no more invitations. Thus the father of Ludovico passed his latter years in perpetual fidgets, always dreading to be scoffed at, not reflecting that to sell is not a whit more ridiculous than to buy, and that the occupation he was now so ashamed of, he had followed a great many years, in the presence of the public, and without any remorse. He caused his son to be educated nobly, after the manner of the times, and to as great an extent as the laws and customs permitted him. He gave him masters in polite

letters, and in equestrian exercises, and when he died, left him rich and young.

Ludovico had contracted gentlemanly habits, and the adulators amongst whom he had been brought up, had accustomed him to be treated with great respect. But when he attempted to mingle with the first class in the city, he met with manners very different from those he had been accustomed to. He saw that to live in such society, as he wished to do, it would be necessary to go through a new school of patience and submission, to follow upon all occasions, and to swallow disagreeable things at every instant. This mode of life neither suited the education nor the natural temper of Ludovico. He withdrew from this class piqued, but he kept aloof against his will, because it appeared to him that his proper companions were to be found there, if they only had been a little more tractable. With this mixture of inclination and dislike, not being able to enjoy their familiar society, and desirous still of being something in common with them, he attempted to rival them in expense and magnificence, thus purchasing with ready money, hatred, envy, and ridicule. His natural temper at once honest and violent, had engaged him early in other difficulties of a more serious kind. He felt a spontaneous and sincere detestation to every kind of extortion and injury; a detestation rendered still more keen in him, by the practices of the persons who were notorious wrong doers at the time, and who were exactly the persons he had taken offence at. To appease, or rather to employ all these passions at once, he willingly took the part of the feeble oppressed, and stood in the way of the oppressor: having got into one quarrel, he soon brought another upon his back, and so little by little he became an avowed protector of the weak and an avenger of their wrongs. The occupation was a burdensome one, and it was not necessary to ask if the poor Ludovico had enemies, encounters, and matter for reflection. Besides this external war, he was continually harrassed with internal contests; for in getting up an enterprise (without mentioning those where he was not the principal) it was necessary himself to concert many means by intrigue and violence, which his conscience could not afterwards approve of. He was obliged to keep about him a good number of the worst kind of Bravos; and as much for his own security, as to have efficient aid, it was necessary to select the most desperate, that is the greatest scoundrels, and thus live amongst villains for the sake of justice. So much so, that more than once either discouraged from bad success, or disturbed by some imminent danger, annoyed by being continually on his guard, sickened to death with his companions, and thoughtful for the future, in relation to his means, which were daily wasting away in good works, and fine undertakings, it more than once came into his head to become a friar, a not uncommon mode in those days of getting out of great scrapes. But this notion, which would have existed in his imagination, perhaps, all his life, became a determination, by the most serious and terrible accident which had ever happened to him.

He was walking one day in a street of the town where he lived, accompanied by an old foreman of the shop, whom his father had transformed into a major domo, and with two Bravos in his train. The major domo, named Christopher, was a man about fifty years old, devoted from his youth to the master whose birth he had witnessed, and through whose liberality he lived and provided for a wife and eight children. Ludovico saw a personage appear at a distance, who was an arrogant oppressor by profession; he had never spoken with him in the course of his life, but the man was his bitter enemy, and he detested him just as cordially. It is a great advantage we have in this world, to be able to hate and to be hated, without being acquainted with each other.

This personage, followed by four Bravos, advanced erect, with a superb air, his head aloft, and his lips expressive of arrogance and contempt. Both of them were walking close to the wall, but Ludovico had it upon his right hand, and this, according to a custom, gave him the privilege (where no one ever attempts to interfere with the right) to keep the wall, and not to permit any one whatever to pass between; and upon this privilege a very great value was set in those times. The person who was now meeting him, insisted that the right belonged to him as a nobleman, and that it was the place of Ludovico to give the wall, in conformity to another custom. Touching this matter, there existed, as it occurs in many other things, two opposing customs, without its having been decided which was the most proper, so that a fair opportunity for a quarrel offered itself, every time that two hotheads clashed together in this way. These two were now drawing close, each of them getting as nigh as he could to the wall, and looking like two walking figures in basso relievo. When they were face to face, the other, looking at Ludovico with a lofty air, and an imperious frown, said to him, in a corresponding tone of voice, "Move away from the wall!"

"Move away, yourself," replied Ludovico, "the wall is mine."

"With men of your class the wall always belongs to me."

"Yes, if the arrogance of men like you was a law for my equals."

The two trains remained still, each behind their chief, scowling at each other like angry dogs, with their hands on their daggers, prepared for battle. The people who were passing in the street, drew back to observe their proceedings, and the presence of these spectators sharpened still more the punctilious feeling of the disputants.

"Make way, vile mechanic, or I'll teach

you at once what manners you ought to observe to gentlemen."

"You lie, when you call me vile."

"You are a liar for telling me I lie, and if you were a cavalier as I am, added he, I would show you with the sword and cape, that you are the liar."

"An excellent pretext to excuse yourself from sustaining by facts the insolence of your words."

"Throw this scoundrel into the mud," said the cavalier, turning round to his men.

"Let us see, first," said Ludovico, quickly drawing back, and carrying his hand to his sword.

"Insolent! cried out the other, unsheathing his own, "but I will break this, when it has been stained with such blood as thine."

Thus they rushed upon each other, the servants on both sides coming to the defence of their masters. The combat was unequal, both in numbers, and because Ludovico sought rather to avoid the thrusts and to disarm his enemy, than to slay him; but nothing but blood would satisfy the other. Ludovico had already received on his left arm a stab from one of the Bravos, and a slight scratch on one of his cheeks, and his principal antagonist, the cavalier, was rushing to despatch him, when Christopher, seeing his master in extreme danger, drew his dagger to aid him. The cavalier turning all his rage against Christopher, ran him through with his sword. At this sight, Ludovico, like one besides himself, plunged his own into the body of his enemy, who fell to the ground, dying almost at the same moment with poor Christopher. The Bravos of the dying man, seeing their leader fall, took to flight, not with whole skins; and those of Ludovico too, pretty well mauled and cut, not finding any thing more to do, took to their heels, unwilling to get into further troubles from the people who were running to the place. Ludovico thus found himself alone, with those two fatal companions at his feet, in the midst of a crowd.

"What has happened? There is one—there is two of them! What a button hole he has made in his paunch! Who has been killed? That proud fellow, there! Oh, holy Maria, what destruction! He who seeks is sure to find—once pays for all—and so he is done for! What a blow! This is a serious piece of business. And that other poor fellow! Mercy! what a spectacle! Save him, save him, he is in for it too,—See how they have used him, how he is bleeding! Escape, poor follow, escape, don't let yourself be taken."

These words, which rose above the tumultuous din made by the crowd, expressed the common voice, and with counsel aid came hand in hand. The assault had happened near a church of the capuchins, an asylum, as every one knows, impenetrable then to the police, and all that complexity of things and persons which went under the name of justice. The wounded homicide was conducted, or rather carried there out of the crowd, almost insensible, and the friars received him from the hands of the people, who recommended him to them, saying, "It is a very respectable man, who has stiffened one of these superb rascals; he did it in his own defence, and was dragged into the business by the hair of his head."

Ludovico had never before spilt blood, and although homicides in those days were so common, that the ears of every one were accustomed to hear of them, and their eyes to witness them, still the impression which he received from beholding the corpse of the man who died for him, and that of the man who had died by him, was new and inexpressible; it produced a revelation of feeling to him hitherto unknown. The falling down of his enemy, the change of those features, which passed in a moment from threatening and fury, to the submission and quiet solemnity of death, was a spectacle which produced a complete change in the mind of the slayer. Dragged, as it were, to the convent, he scarcely knew where he was, or what he was doing, and when memory returned, he found himself in one of the beds of the convent infirmary, in the hands of the surgeon friar, (the capuchins usually had one in every convent) who was applying bandages and lint to the wounds he had received in the encounter. One of the fathers, whose particular charge it was to attend the dying, and who had frequently rendered services of that character whilst in the streets, was soon called to the place of combat. Returning a few minutes afterwards, he entered the infirmary, and approaching the bed where Ludovico laid, said to him, "At least he died well, and desired me to ask your pardon, and to carry you his own." These words brought Ludovico completely to himself, and awakened in him, in a still more distinct and lively manner, the confused and troubled feelings of his soul: grief for his friend, dread and remorse for the fatal blow which had escaped him, and at the same time, a compassionate anguish for the man he had slain. "And the other?" he anxiously inquired of the friar.

"The other had expired before I arrived."

In the mean time the streets leading to the convent, and the neighborhood, swarmed with curious people, but the police being arrived, forced the crowd to retreat, so that they could establish themselves near the gates, and not too far off to permit any one to leave the convent unobserved. A brother of the deceased, two of his cousins, and an ancient uncle, also came armed from head to foot, with a great retinue of Bravos, and began to go the rounds, watching with angry looks and menacing gestures the idle crowd, who had written on their faces, what they did not dare to say, "They deserve what they have got."

Scarce had Ludovico recovered his thoughts, than, having sent for a friar confessor, he entreated him to seek out the widow of Christopher, and to ask her, in his name, to pardon

him for having been the cause, although most certainly the involuntary one, of her desolate situation, at the same time assuring her he would take upon himself the care of her family. Reflecting further upon his affairs, he felt the revival within himself, in a still more lively and serious manner, of that desire to become a friar, which at other times had occupied his mind; it seemed to him, as if God had directed his steps, and given him a sign of his will, by causing him to be brought to that convent, at such a juncture, and his determination was taken. He desired the guardian of the convent to be called, and communicated to him his design. He was answered, that hasty resolutions were to be avoided, but that if he persisted in his intention, he would not be refused. Upon which, having sent for a notary he dictated a donation of all the property that he still had, (not a small patrimony,) to the family of Christopher, a particular sum to the widow, as if he was constituting a dowry for her, and the remainder to her children.

The resolution of Ludovico came opportunely for his hosts, who on his account had got into no small difficulty. To drive him from the convent, and expose him to justice, that is, to the vengeance of his enemies, was not a course they could even deliberate upon. It would have been equal to a renunciation of their own privileges: to the discrediting of the convent with the people. It would have drawn the animadversion of all the capuchins in the world down upon them for having betrayed the rights of all, and have roused against them all the ecclesiastical authorities, which considered themselves the guardians of these rights. On the other side, the family of the slain cavalier, extremely powerful and strong in adherents had adopted means to take vengeance, and had declared every one their enemy, who should oppose them in any manner. How far this death was a true cause of grief to them, how many tears were shed on his account by his connexions, the story does not relate, it only says that they were inflamed with the desire to have the homicide in their power, dead or alive.

But this determination to put on the capuchin habit reconciled every thing. To a certain extent it made amends; it imposed a penitence upon himself; it acknowledged himself to be implicitly in fault; it was withdrawing himself from all future quarrels; it was in fact assuming the position of an enemy who lays down his arms. The relations of the defunct might even, if they chose, believe and vaunt that he had become a friar through despair and terror of their resentment; and, at any rate, to bring a man to the point of alienating his property, shaving his head, walking barefoot, sleeping upon straw, and living upon alms, would seem a sufficient punishment for offences of the very worst character. The father guardian presented himself with an unaffected humility to the brother of the deceased, and after many protestations of respect for his illustrious house, and of a desire to propitiate them in every practicable way, spoke of the repentance of Ludovico, and of his determination; giving him to understand, in the most courteous manner, that his house had reason to be satisfied; and insinuating in a very mild and still more dexterous language, that whether they were satisfied or not, the matter must rest here. The brother went into a fury, which the capuchin permitted to evaporate, saying from time to time, "Your grief is too just." He gave him to understand that in any case his family would not lack the means of getting satisfaction, and the capuchin, whatever his opinion might be, took care not to contradict him. Finally he required, and imposed as a condition, that the slayer of his brother should immediately leave the city. The capuchin who had already determined upon this, said that it should be so, leaving him to believe, if he liked, that this was an act of obedience, and so every thing was concluded. The family was content, because they had got rid of a disagreeble affair; the friars were content, because they had saved a man, as well as their privileges, without making an enemy; the cavaliers were content, because the affair had been brought to a satisfactory termination; the people were content, because a man whom they liked, was extricated from a difficulty, and because at the same time they admired conversions; finally, more content than all the rest, in the midst of his grief, was Ludovico, who was now to enter upon a life of expiation, and of service, that might, if it did not repair, at least atone for his deed, and deaden the intolerable sting of remorse. The suspicion that his determination might be attributed to fear, afflicted him a moment, but he soon consoled himself with the reflection that even that unjust judgment would be a chastisement for him, and a means of expiation. Thus, at the age of thirty years, he wrapped himself in the sackcloth of the capuchins, and obliged, according to custom, to abandon his own name, and to take another, he selected one that at every moment should remind him of the cause of his expiation, and called himself friar Christopher.

Scarcely was the ceremony of investiture completed, when the father guardian intimated to him, that his noviciate must be passed at—— sixty miles off, and that he must depart the next day. The noviciate bowed reverently, and asked a favor. "Suffer me, father," said he, "ere I leave this city, where I have shed the blood of a man, where I leave a family deeply offended, that I remove the affront, that I show at least my remorse at not being able to repair the injury I have done, by asking pardon of the brother of the deceased, and of removing, if it is God's pleasure, the rancor from his soul." It seemed to the guardian, that such an act, besides being good in itself, would assist to reconcile the family still more to the convent, and he immediately went to the brother, to communicate to him the request of friar Christopher. At so unexpected a proposi-

tion, the brother experienced, with his astonishment, a movement of anger, mixed however with complacency. After having reflected a moment, "Let him come tomorrow," said he, and named the hour. The guardian returned to communicate to the noviciate the desired permission.

The cavalier soon perceived that the more solemn and public this act of submission was, the more his credit with his connections and with the public would increase, and that it would be (to clothe it in an elegant phrase of modern times) a fine page in the history of the family. In great haste he sent advice to all his relatives, that on the next day, at noon, they should convene at his mansion, to receive a common satisfaction. At noon, the palace was crowded with personages of every age and every sex, with a circling about, a mixing up of immense capes, of lofty plumes, a cautious movement of starched and crisped ruffs, and a confused dragging about of arabesque symars.* The antichambers, the court yard, and the street swarmed with servants, pages, Bravos, and idle people. Friar Christopher saw all this preparation, and in divining the cause, experienced a slight perturbation; but an instant after, he said to himself—"It is well—I slew him in public, in the presence of so many of his enemies. That was a dishonor, and this is a reparation." Thus, with his eyes on the ground, with the father at his side for a companion, he passed the gate of the mansion, and crossed the court yard through a crowd that stared at him with an unceremonious curiosity. Ascending the stairs, through another crowd of gentlefolks, who made room for him to pass, followed by a hundred curious eyes, he arrived in the presence of the master of the house, who, surrounded by his nearest relatives, stood erect in the midst of the hall, his chin lifted up, his eyes bent downwards, with his left hand grasping the pummel of his sword, and drawing, with his right, the cape of his cloak upon his breast.

There is, at times, in the countenance, and in the deportment of a man, an expression so remarkable, that it may be said to be an effusion of the soul within; so that there can, in a crowd of spectators, be but one opinion concerning it. The countenance and deportment of friar Christopher, revealed at once to the beholders that he had not become a friar, nor offered himself to so much humiliation through human fear, and all their minds began to be conciliated to him. When he saw the injured brother, he quickened his pace, knelt before him, crossed his hands upon his breast, and bowing down his shaven head, said these words: "I am the homicide of your brother. God knows I would restore him to you at the cost of my own blood, but having nothing but inefficacious and tardy excuses to make to you, I beseech you to accept them for God's sake." All eyes were immoveably fixed upon the noviciate, and to the person to whom he addressed himself; every ear was intent. When brother Christopher ceased to speak, a murmur of compassion and respect; arose in the hall. The cavalier, who stood in an attitude of forced complacency, and of repressed anger, was moved by these words, and stooping towards the kneeling supplicant, he answered with a disturbed voice, "The offence—the act truly—but the habit you wear—not this alone, but also you, yourself—rise, father—my brother—I cannot deny it—was a cavalier—a man—somewhat hasty—somewhat quick. But all things are ruled by God—let no more be said. But, father, you must not remain in this posture;" and, taking him by the arm, he raised him up. Brother Christopher, standing up, but with his head drooping, answered, "I may, then, hope that you have granted me your pardon; and if I obtain it from you, from whom may I not hope to obtain it! Oh! if I could only hear from your lips these words, 'I pardon you!'"

"I pardon you?" said the cavalier, "you have no occasion for it. But, indeed, since you desire it, I pardon you from my heart, and all—"

"All, all," cried out at once the assembled company. The countenance of the friar once more expanded itself with grateful joy; beneath which still appeared a humble and profound compunction for a deed, to which the remission of men was insufficient. The cavalier, overcome by his aspect, and by the general agitation, threw his arms around the neck of Christopher, and exchanged the kiss of peace with him. "Bravo, well done!" broke out from every part of the hall; all were in motion, and eager to approach the friar. In the meantime, the servants brought great quantities of refreshments. The cavalier, again drawing near to Christopher, who was preparing to take his leave, said, "Father, be pleased to take something or other, give me this proof of your friendship." And he put himself in the act of serving him before the rest; but drawing back, with a kind of amiable resistance, "These things," said he, "are no longer for me, but heaven forbid that I should refuse your gifts. I am going a journey, be pleased then to cause a loaf to be given to me, that I may say I have enjoyed your charity, that I have eaten your bread, and received a sign of your pardon." The cavalier, touched, ordered this to be done; and a major domo, dressed in great gala, immediately came, bringing a loaf in a silver salver, and presented it to the father, who having taken it, and given thanks, put it in his basket. He then asked permission to go, and having again embraced the master of the house, and all those near enough to get hold of him, for a moment, got away with difficulty. In the antichambers he had the same trouble to free himself from the servants, and even from the Bravos, who kissed the hem of his garment, his cordon, and his cowl. Thus borne into

* A long dress.

the street in triumph, and accompanied by a crowd of people, as far as one of the gates of the city, he took his departure, beginning his pedestrian journey towards the place of his noviciate.

The brother of the deceased cavalier, and his relatives, who had prepared themselves on that day to taste the miserable pleasures of a gratified pride, had their hearts filled with that serene joy, which pardon and benevolence inspire. The company remained some time in unusual cordiality and cheerfulness, indulging in reasonings and feelings for which no one had been prepared. Instead of satisfactions rendered, an assault vindicated, and enterprizes abandoned, the praises of the noviciate, reconciliations, and benignity, were the themes of their conversation. And such a one, who for the fiftieth time would have related, how Count Muzio, his father, knew, in a famous juncture, how to put a stop to that Marquis Stanislaus, who was a rodomont known to every body; in the place of it, dwelt upon the penitences and the wonderful patience of a brother Simon, who died many years before. The company being gone, the master of the house, yet affected by his emotions, again revolved in his mind, with surprise, what he had heard, and what he himself had said, and muttered between his teeth—"The devil take that friar! (We must give his precise words.) The devil take that friar! if he had remained any longer on his knees, I should have been almost for begging him to excuse me, because he had killed my brother." Our history expressly notes that from that day he became a little less impetuous, and more manageable.

Father Christopher walked on with a consolation at heart he had never experienced since that terrible day, to expiate which his whole life was to be consecrated. Silence was imposed on noviciates, and he observed the injunction without pain, entirely absorbed in the thought of the fatigues, the privations, and the humiliations that he must endure, in order to atone for his fault. At the hour of repast, he stopped at a benevolent person's, and ate with a kind of voluptuousness of the bread of pardon, but spared a crust of it, and placed it in his basket, to preserve it as a perpetual remembrance.

It is not our design to enter upon the history of his cloisteral life; we shall only say, that discharging always with good will and great care the duties which were ordinarily assigned to him, of preaching and of assisting the dying, he never permitted an occasion to pass by of discharging two other duties he had imposed upon himself; of making up quarrels, and of protecting the oppressed. In this way he indulged, without being aware of it, in some degree his ancient habits, and some little remains of that belligerent spirit, which humiliations and mortifications had not been able entirely to extinguish in him. His conversation was habitually mild and humble, but when the subject was oppugnancy to justice and truth, he became at once animated with his old feelings and warmth, which mixed up with, and modified by, that solemn emphasis, which the habit of preaching had given him, impressed his discourse with a singular character. His whole deportment, as well as his aspect, announced a long contest between a quick and hasty nature, and an opposing will, habitually victorious, always on the alert, and governed by lofty motives and inspirations. One of his brethren, and a friend of his, who knew him well, once compared him to those words too expressive in their natural form, which some persons, however well bred, when passion rules, pronounce in a suppressed manner, and even changing a letter or two; words which, however disguised, remind one of their primitive energy.

If a poor unknown girl, as in the melancholy case of Lucia, had asked the assistance of father Christopher, he would have given it to her immediately. But, knowing it was Lucia, he went to her aid with the greater solicitude, because he knew and admired her innocence; had trembled at the danger she was exposed to, and felt a lively indignation at the brutal persecution of which she was the object. To this also may be added, that having advised her, as the best course, to say nothing for the present, and to remain quiet, he was afraid the advice had produced a bad effect; and to the solicitude of true charity, which in him was, as it were, innate, was added, in this case, that scrupulous anxiety, which often torments the good.

But whilst we are occupied in relating the affairs of father Christopher, he is arrived, presents himself to the door, and the women, dropping the handle of the revolving and screaking wheel, jumped up, crying at the same time, "Here's father Christopher! God bless him!"

CHAPTER V.

And there stood the identical father Christopher, erect upon the threshold, who, with a single glance at the women, could not fail to perceive that his presentiments had not deceived him. Whence, with that tone of interrogation which precedes a sorrowful answer, and raising his beard, by throwing his head back with a slight movement, he said, "Well, then?" Lucia answered by a burst of tears. The mother began by making excuses for having dared—but advancing and seating himself upon a small bench with three legs, he cut all excuses short, saying to Lucia, "Tranquilize yourself, poor girl! and you," turning to Agnes, "tell me what has happened." Whilst the good woman told her sad story in the best way she could, the friar turned a thousand colors, and sometimes raised

his eyes to heaven, sometimes beat the floor with his feet. The story being told, he covered his face with both his hands, and exclaimed, "Oh, blessed God, to what point—!" but without finishing the phrase, turning again to the women, "Poor creatures," he said; "God has visited you, poor Lucia!"

"You will not abandon us, father?" said Lucia, sobbing.

"Abandon you!" replied he, "Great God! with what face could I ask any thing for myself, if I were to abandon you? You, in this condition! You, whom he has confided to me! Do not lose your courage; he will assist you. He sees every thing; he can even make use of a man who is nothing—like myself, to confound a—let us see, let us think upon what can be done."

Saying this, he leaned his left elbow upon his knee, lowered his forehead into his palm, and with his right hand grasped his beard and his chin, as if to hold all the powers of his mind firm and united. But the most attentive consideration only served to convince him distinctly how pressing and intricate the case was, and how few, how uncertain, and how dangerous were the remedies. To penetrate Don Abbondio with shame, and make him sensible how he had failed in his duty? But shame and duty were nothing to a man like him, under the influence of fear. To make him afraid? What means have I to create a greater apprehension in him, than that which he has of being fired at? To inform the cardinal archbishop, and invoke his authority? That will be a long business, and in the meantime—and afterwards? When even this unhappy innocent should become a wife, would that bridle this man? Who knows how far he might go? And then to resist him? How? Ah! if I could get my brethren here, those of Milan, to——! But this is not a common affair; I should be abandoned. He pretends to be a friend to the convent, gives himself out for a partisan of the capuchins, and his own villanous dependents and tools, have they not more than once taken refuge with us? I should be left alone, and should be called a disturber, an embroiler, a quarrelsome man, and, what is more, I might also, by an injudicious attempt, make this poor girl's situation still worse. Having compared all the reasons for and against this and the other plan, it appeared to him best to see Don Rodrigo himself, to endeavor to dissuade him from his infamous intention, by supplications, and by terrors of another world, if it were possible to inspire him with such. At the worst, in this manner it might be discovered more clearly how far he was determined to pursue his vile plan, to discover something more of it, and take further counsel.

Whilst the friar was thus meditating, Renzo, who, for the various reasons which may be divined, was unable to keep far from the house, had appeared at the door; but perceiving the father absorbed, and the women making signs not to disturb him, stood upon the threshold in silence. Raising his face to communicate to the women his intention, the friar perceived him, and saluted him in a way that expressed an habitual affection, rendered more intense by pity.

"Have they told you, father?" asked Renzo with a troubled voice.

"Too much, and on that account I am here."

"What does your worship say of that scoundrel——?"

"What would you that I should say of him? he is far off, and words will profit nothing. I say to thee, Renzo, that thou must trust in God, and that he will not abandon thee."

"Blessed are your words," exclaimed the youth. "Your worship is not one of those who are always against poor people. But the curate and that signor doctor——"

"Don't talk of what can serve to no purpose but to vex thyself uselessly. I am a poor friar, but I repeat to thee what I have said to these women, for the little that I am worth, I will not abandon you."

"Oh, you are not like the friends of the world. Useless creatures! who would have believed—the protestations they made me at one time; yes, yes, they were ready to give their blood for me, they would have maintained me against the devil! If I had had an enemy? I had only to speak a word, and he would not have eaten much more bread. And now, only to see how they draw back." At this point, the speaker saw by the clouded countenance of him who listened to him, that he had said a very silly thing, and wanting to mend it, went on embarrassing and embroiling himself,—"I meant to say—I did not at all intend—that is—I meant——"

"What did you mean to say? How then? You wanted to destroy my work before I had begun it! It is well that you have been undeceived in time. What! you was looking for friends—what sort of friends? Such as could not have assisted you if they had wished it. And you was going to lose the only one who can and who will help you! Dost thou not know that God is the friend of all in tribulation, who trust in him? Dost thou not know that it does the weak no good to show their teeth? And even when"—at this point, he clasped strongly the arm of Renzo; his aspect, without losing any authority, was lighted up with a solemn compunction, his eyes drooped, his voice became slow and as it were subterranean—"and even when they do it, it is a terrible cast! Renzo, wilt thou confide in me? What do I say—in me, a poor miserable man, an insignificant friar? Wilt thou confide in God?"

"Oh yes," answered Renzo, "he is the lord in truth."

"Well, promise that thou wilt offend, wilt provoke no one, that thou wilt be guided by me."

"I promise it."

Lucia gave a great sigh, as if she had been relieved from a heavy weight, and Agnes said "Bravo, son!"

"Hear me, children," resumed brother Cbristopher; "I will go to day and speak with that man. If God touches his heart, and gives strength to my words, well; and if not, he will point out some other remedy to us. In the meantime, be tranquil, keep retired, avoid all talking, do not show yourselves. This evening, or tomorrow at farthest, you will see me again." Having said this he cut short all thanks and blessings and departed. Taking the road to the convent, he arrived in season to join the chorus in the psalms, dined, and immediately began his expedition to the den of the wild beast he had undertaken to tame.

The extensive palace of Don Rodrigo stood in an isolated position, resembling a small town, upon the summit of one of those promontories which jut out numerously on that coast. It was higher up than the village of the lovers, distant perhaps three miles, and from the convent, four. At the foot of the promontory, on the part looking towards the lake, was a heap of miserable cabins, inhabited by the country people of Don Rodrigo, the little capital of his small kingdom. It sufficed to pass there, to comprehend the customs and state of the place. A single glance at the rooms on the ground floor, where a door was open, disclosed arquebusses, hoes, rakes, straw hats, nets and powder horns, hanging confusedly together from the walls. The men you met were gross and rude, with a great tuft thrown back on the head, and enclosed in a net; the old ones who had lost their teeth, seemed always ready, and without any one urging them, to grind their jaws together; and the women had strange masculine faces, and nervous arms, excellent to come in aid of their tongues at the first occasion; in the countenances and gestures even of the children who played in the street, there was something at once daring and insolent.

Brother Christopher traversed the hamlet, ascending by a winding path, and came upon a small terrace in front of the palace. The gate was shut, a sign that the master was dining, and did not wish to be disturbed. The few and small windows which looked upon the road, closed by shutters disconnected, and decayed with age, were nevertheless defended by thick iron bars, and those of the ground floor were raised so high, that a man could scarce reach to them if mounted on the shoulders of another. A profound silence reigned, and a passenger might have thought that it was an abandoned house, if four creatures, two alive and two dead, placed symmetrically without, had not given indications of inhabitants. Two large vultures, their wings fully stretched out, and their heads dangling down, one of them without feathers, and half wasted away by time, the other yet sound and in plumage, were each nailed upon a post of the principal gate; and two Bravos, each stretched out upon one of the benches placed there right and left, kept guard, waiting to be called to partake of the leavings of their master's table. The father stopped immediately, with the act of a person disposing himself to wait, but one of the Bravos rose, and said to him, "Father, father, you can come forward, we don't make capuchins wait here; we are friends of the convent, and I have been there in certain moments, when the air out doors, was not very wholesome for me, and if they had not let me in, it would have gone hard with me." Saying this, he struck two strokes with the hammer on the bell. At that sound, the howling and barking of mastiffs and dogs, soon answered from within, and a few moments after an old servant came grumbling along, but seeing the father, he made him a low bow, quieted the animals with his hands and voice, and introduced him into a narrow court yard and shut the door. Escorting him then into a small parlor, and looking at him with a certain air of wonder and respect, he said,

"Is not this father Christopher of Pescarenico?"

"Exactly so."

"He, here!"

"As you see, good man."

"It will be to do good! good," continued he, murmuring between his teeth, and walking on, "good can be done every where." Having passed through two or three small rooms they reached the door of the banqueting hall. From thence was heard a confused rumbling of knives and forks, glasses, metal plates, and above all of discordant voices seeking to overbear each other. The friar was desirous of keeping back, and was urging the servant at the door, to permit him to remain in some corner of the place, until the repast was over, when the door opened. A certain Count Attilio who sat opposite to him, (he was cousin to the master of the house, and we have already mentioned, without naming him,) seeing a tunic and a shaved head, and aware of the modest intention of the good friar, "Ay, ay," he called out, "don't run away, reverend father, come forward, come forward." Don Rodrigo, without guessing precisely the object of his visit, still, from a sort of confused presentiment, would have excused it. But since the thoughtless Attilio had already called him so distinctly, he could not appear backwards in the matter, and said, "Come in, father, come in." He advanced, bowing to the master, and returning the salutations of the guests with both his hands.

When an honest man is with a scoundrel, he is generally, (I do not say it of every one,) pleased to imagine that he may carry a lofty front, a confident look, a raised up breast, and a free tongue. In fact, however, many circumstances must concur, such as are rarely combined, to enable a man to take an attitude of that kind. For this reason, it ought not to be deemed surprising, if brother Christopher, with the good testimony of his own conscience,

with a firm opinion of the justice of the cause he came to sustain, and a mingled sentiment of horror and compassion towards Don Rodrigo, should stand there with a certain air of bashfulness and submission at the aspect of that same Don Rodrigo, seated there in his chair, in his house, in his own territory, surrounded by friends, homages, and indications of power, with a physiognomy that forbade the utterance of any request, to say nothing of advice, correction, or reproach, On his right sat Count Attilio his cousin, and if it is necessary to say so, his colleague in libertinism and excesses, who had come from Milan to ruralize a few days with him. On his left, and on the other side of the table, sat, with great respect, tempered however, with a sort of confidence, and something like presumption, the signor podesta or magistrate, the identical person, according to the proclamation, whose duty it would have been to render justice to Renzo Tramaglino, and to punish Don Rodrigo. Opposite to the podesta, with a respect the most pure, the most devoted, was seated our Doctor Azzecca-garbugli, in a black cloak, and with his nose redder than usual. Fronting the two cousins, were two obscure guests, respecting whom our story only observes, that they did nothing but eat, bow their heads, smile and approve every thing that was said by the other guests, provided it was not contradicted.

"Give the father a seat," said Don Rodrigo.

A servant brought a chair, upon which father Christopher sat down, excusing himself to the master of the house for having come at so inopportune a moment. "I should wish to speak to you quite alone, about an affair of importance," added he, with a low voice addressed to Don Rodrigo.

"Well, well, we will talk," he answered "but in the meantime, give the father something to drink."

The father wanted to excuse himself, but Don Rodrigo raising his voice, in the midst of the talking which had again begun, called out, "No, by Bacchus, you shall not do me so much wrong; it never shall be that a capuchin shall go away from this house, without having tasted my wine, nor an insolent creditor without having felt what grows in my woods, on his shoulders. This sally was followed by a general laugh, and interrupted for a moment the dispute warmly kept up by the guests. A servant, bringing upon a salver a vase containing wine, and a long glass in the shape of a cup, presented them to the father, who, not judging it prudent to resist so pressing an invitation from the man it was so important for him to propitiate, did not hesitate to pour out the wine, and began to sip it slowly.

"The authority of Tasso does not suit your case, very revered signor podesta;" "nay, it is against you," began to bawl out Don Attilio, "for that erudite scholar, that great man, who knows most minutely all the laws of chivalry, has arranged it so that the messenger of Argante, before he carries the defiance to the christian knights, asks permission of the pious Bouillon."

"But this," replied the podesta in as bad a voice, "this is a redundancy, a mere redundancy, a poetical ornament, since the messenger is in his character inviolable by the law of nations, *jure gentium;* and without going so far to seek, the proverb also has it, 'an ambassador cannot be punished.' And proverbs, signor count, are the wisdom of the human race. And the messenger having said nothing in his own proper name, but having only presented the challenge in writing——"

"But when will you comprehend, that that messenger was a rash fool, knowing nothing of the first——"

"With your good leave, gentlemen," said Don Rodrigo, interrupting them, and who did not wish the dispute to proceed any further, "let us refer the matter to father Christopher, and agree to his decision."

"Very well, excellently," said count Attilio, who thought it a capital stroke to get a question about chivalry decided by a capuchin; whilst the podesta, who had the dispute more at heart, reluctantly acquiesced, and with a slight grimace, that seemed to say, "boy's play!"

"But from what I seem to have heard," said the father, "these are not matters about which I ought to have any knowledge."

"The common excuses of the modesty of your reverences," said Don Rodrigo, "but we won't let you off. Ay! ay, we know very well that your worship did not come into the world with a cowl on your head, and that the world has been acquainted with you. Come, come, here is the question."

"The fact is as thus," count Attilio began to cry out.

"Let me, who am neutral, state it, cousin," said Don Rodrigo.

"This is the story: a Spanish cavalier sends a challenge to a Milanese cavalier; the messenger not finding the challenged party at home, delivers the cartel to a brother of the cavalier, who reads the challenge, and, by way of answer, gives the messenger a thrashing with a club. The question——"

"Very well given, and excellently applied," screamed out Don Attilio, "it was a perfect inspiration."

"Of the devil," said the podesta. "Strike an ambassador! a sacred person! Even you, father, will tell me if that is an act becoming a cavalier."

"Yes, sir, becoming a cavalier!" cried out the count; "and permit me to say so, who understands what it becomes a cavalier to do. If he had struck him with his fists, it would have been another affair; but a gentleman may use a club, without dirtying his hands. But what I cannot understand is, why you make so much to do about the shoulders of such a low fellow."

"Who has said any thing about shoulders,

Count? You put extravagancies in my mouth that never came into my head. I spoke of character, and not of shoulders; above all, I am speaking of the laws of chivalry. Have the goodness to tell me, if the heralds that the ancient Romans sent to deliver defiances to the other nations—if they sought permission first to deliver their embassy; and then be kind enough to find me some writer who makes mention of a herald ever having been beaten."

"What have those officials of the ancient Romans to do with our customs? A people that did whatever they pleased, and that in these matters were far behind—far behind. But, according to the laws of modern chivalry, which are the true laws, I say and maintain, that a messenger who is audacious enough to put a challenge into the hands of a cavalier, without having first demanded permission, is a rash fellow, that you may violate in all violable ways, and thrash in all thrashable ways."

"Answer me this syllogism, now——"

"No, no, no, no!"

"But hear, hear, hear. To strike an unarmed man is a treacherous act. *Atque* the messenger *de quo* was without arms, *Ergo*—"

"Gently, gently, signor podesta."

"How, gently?"

"Gently, I tell you, what are you talking about? A treacherous act is to strike with a sword behind, or to fire into a man's back; and even then there are certain cases—but let us hold to the question. I admit, that generally speaking, this may be called treacherous, but to give a slight drubbing to a beggarly low rascal! It would be a fine thing if one had to tell such a fellow—look out, I am going to thrash you—as one would say to a gentleman, draw your sword! And you, most revered signor doctor, instead of grinning as if you were of my opinion, why don't you sustain my reasons with your good clapper, and help me to drive some sense into this gentleman's head?"

"I——," answered the doctor, rather confused, "I delight in this learned dispute, and thank the happy accident which has given birth to such a graceful conflict of wit. And then it is not for me to decide; a most illustrious person has already appointed a judge—the father here——"

"It is true," said Don Rodrigo, "but how is the judge to speak when the litigants won't be silent?"

"I am mute," said Count Attilio. The podesta also made signs that he would remain silent.

"Ah, at length! now you, father," said Don Rodrigo, with a quizzing sort of gravity.

"I have already made my excuse by saying, I do not understand," replied father Christopher, returning the glass to the servant.

"Poor excuses," cried out the two cousins; "let us have the decision."

"If it must be so," resumed the friar, "my poor opinion would be, that there should neither be challenges, nor messengers, nor beatings." The guests stared at each other.

"Oh, that is too monstrous!" said Count Attilio; "pardon me, father, but that is too bad. It is very clear that you don't understand the world."

"He?" said Don Rodrigo, "Ah, ah! he knows it as well as you do, cousin. Is it not true, father; say, have not you had your run through it?"

Instead of replying to this benevolent insinuation, the friar exchanged a word in secret with himself—this comes home to thyself, but remember, friar, that you are not here on your own account—and whatever hits you only, must be disregarded.—

"It will be—" said Attilio, "but the father—what is the father's name?"

"Father Christopher," replied one of them.

"But, father Christopher, my most respectable sir, with these maxims of yours, you would turn the world upside down. Without challenges! Without beatings! Adieu, point of honor; impunity for all dirty rascals! Happily the supposition is impossible."

"Come, doctor," said Don Rodrigo, who was seeking always to divert the dispute from the two first disputants—"Come, let's have your opinion; you are a man that can decide any thing and every thing; let us see how you will set father Christopher right in this affair."

"In truth," replied the doctor, brandishing his fork in the air, and turning to the friar, "in truth, I cannot comprehend how father Christopher, who is at the same time a perfect religious man, and a man of the world, has not perceived that his sentence, good, excellent, and of great weight in the pulpit, is worth nothing at all; I say it with all respect, in a dispute about chivalry. But the father knows better than I do, that every thing is good in its place; and I believe, that upon this occasion, he has wanted to extricate himself with a little joke, from the perplexity he felt at deciding the matter."

What answer could be given to reasonings deduced from wisdom so very ancient, and still always new? None. And so the friar left the matter.

But Don Rodrigo, to put an end to that question, got up another. "A propos," said he, "I hear there is some talk at Milan of an accommodation."

The reader knows, that in that year there was a disputed succession about the Dukedom of Mantua, into the possession of which, on the death of Vincent Gonzaga, who had left no male heir, the Duke of Nevers, his nearest relation, had entered. Louis XIII, or the Cardinal of Richelieu, wished to support him, on account of his affection to him as a native Frenchman. Philip IV, or the Count of Olivares, commonly called the Count Duke, was opposed to him for the same reasons, and made war upon him. But as that duchy was

feudatory of the empire, the two parties were operating by manœuvres, pressing instances, and even threats, with the Emperor Ferdinand II; the first, to induce him to grant the investiture to the new duke; the second, to prevail upon him, not only to refuse it, but to give his assistance to drive him from the duchy.

"I am not far from believing," said Count Attilio, "that matters may be adjusted. I have certain reasons—"

"Don't you believe it, count, don't you believe it," interrupted the podesta. "I, in this little corner of the world, may know something too about the affair. The Spanish Castellan, a gentleman who does me the honor to entertain some kindness for me, and who, by reason of his being the son of a servant of the Count Dukes, is informed of every thing—"

"And I say that it occurs to me to speak with high personages every day in Milan, and I know, from a very good quarter, that the pope, who is exceedingly interested in preserving peace, has made propositions—"

"That is all right—nothing can be more proper. His Holiness does his duty, a pope ought always to be engaged in good acts between Christian princes; but the Count Duke has a policy to observe, and—"

"And, and, and, do you know my good sir, what the emperor is thinking of at this moment? Do you suppose there is no place but Mantua in this world? There are many things to be looked after, my good sir. Do you know, for example, how far the emperor may trust himself at this time to that prince of his of Valdistano, or Vallistai, or how does he call himself? And if—"

"The legitimate name in the German language," once more interrupted the podesta, "is Wallenstein, as I have more than once heard it pronounced by the Spanish Signor Castellan. But do you be assured, that——"

"Will you teach me?" broke in the count, but Don Rodrigo, with his knee, begged him, as it were, for his sake, to give over contradicting the podesta; he therefore stopped, but his adversary, like a ship that had floated off the shoals, continued under full sail, the course of his eloquence. "Wallenstein gives me very little trouble, for the Count Duke has his eye every where, and upon every thing, and if Wallenstein indulges in any humors of his own, the count knows how to keep him in order, by gentle means and by others too. He has his eye every way, I say, and long hands, and if he has made up his mind, as he has made it up, and justly, like a great politician as he is, that the Duke of Nevers shall not plant his roots in Mantua, the Duke of Nevers shall not plant them there, and Cardinal Richelieu is boring a hole in the water. It makes me laugh, the very idea of that dear good cardinal wanting to try his horns, and butt with a Count Duke, with an Olivares. I say I should like mightily to come back here two hundred years hence, to see what posterity will say at a pretension of this kind. There must be something more than envy, there must be a little brains at work, and as to heads like that of the Count Duke, there is but one in this world. The Count Duke, gentlemen," went on the podesta, always with a fair wind, and a little astonished himself that he had found no rocks in the way, "the Count Duke is an old fox, speaking with all respect, who would throw any body out, let him be whom he may, and when he feigns to take the right, if you want to find him you must take the left; whence it is that no one can ever boast of knowing his designs, and even those who are to execute them, those even who write his despatches, don't comprehend them. I can speak with some information; for that excellent person the Signor Castellan has the complaisance to admit me into his confidence. The Count Duke, on the other hand, knows to a point, what is boiling in the pot at all the other courts, and all those long-headed politicians, and it cannot be denied there are a good many of them, have scarce formed some scheme, than he has immediately got to the bottom of it with that head of his, by his covered ways and the wires that he has fixed in every direction. That poor man, Cardinal Richelieu, tries here, smells there, sweats, puts his brains to the stretch, and what then? Why, when he has got his mine dug out, he finds the countermine of the Count Duke already prepared."

Heaven knows when the podesta would have descended to the earth again, but Don Rodrigo, himself a little moved by the grimaces his cousin was making, made signs to a servant to bring a certain flask.

"Signor podesta," said Don Rodrigo, "and gentlemen, a bumper if you please, to the Count Duke, and afterwards you will tell me, if the wine is worthy of the personage." The podesta bowed, and in that bow endeavored to convey a sentiment of particular gratitude: for every thing which was done or said in honor of the Count Duke, was, in part, appropriated to his own account.

"Viva, a thousand years, Don Gaspar Guzman, Count of Olivares, Duke of San Lucar, the confident and favorite of the King Don Philip the great, our master!" exclaimed he, raising his glass.

"Viva, a thousand years!" answered all.

"Help the father," said Don Rodrigo.

"Pardon me," answered he, "I have already committed an irregularity, and I could not——"

"How!" said Don Rodrigo, "It is the health of the Count Duke we are drinking. Will you have us think that you incline to the Navarese?" The partisans of the French were thus denominated, and the term probably took its rise when Henry IV, of Navarre, was contending for the throne of France, and was, by his adversaries, called the Navarese.

At such an adjuration it was necessary to drink. All the guests broke out in praise of

the wine, except the doctor, who, with the lifting up of his head, the stretching of his ears, and the compressing of his lips, said, without speaking, more than any other.

"What do you think of it, eh, doctor?" asked Don Rodrigo.

Drawing a nose out of the glass, more ruddy and shining than the glass itself, the doctor replied, emphasizing every syllable, "I say, I declare, and I give sentence, that this is the Olivares of wines; *censui, et in eam ivi sententiam*, that a wine like it is not to be found in the twenty-two kingdoms of the king our master, whom God preserve. I pronounce and define, that the dinners of the illustrious Signor Don Rodrigo surpass the suppers of Heliogabalus, and that famine is banished and driven for ever from this palace, the seat and reign of splendor."

"Well said, well decided!" cried out the whole chorus of guests, but the word "famine," which he had accidentally let slip, turned at once all their minds to that sorrowful topic, and all began to talk of famine. Here they were all of one opinion, but the noise was greater than if they had differed, all spoke at once, "There is no scarcity," said one, "it is the monopolizers who——"

"And the bakers," said another, "who conceal the grain; they should be hanged."

"That's right; they should be hanged without mercy."

"After a few good trials," cried out the podesta.

"What trials?" bawled out, still louder, Count Attilio. "Summary justice. Take three or four, or five or six, who are known to be the wealthiest, and the greatest extortioners, and hang them."

"Examples, Examples, 'without examples you can do nothing.' Hang them, hang them, and grain will come in from every quarter,"

Whoever, passing through a country fair, has enjoyed the harmony of a crew of itinerant musicians, who, between their performances, when each tunes his instrument, making it scream as loud as he can, the better to hear it amidst the clamor of the others, may figure to himself what sort of accord these men produced by such, if so it can be called, conversation. In the mean time the wine kept circulating, and its praises, as was just and right, alternated with sentences of economical jurisprudence, so that the most sonorous and frequent words were, "ambrosia" and "hang them."

Don Rodrigo cast a look from time to time at the friar, and observed that he preserved the same firm position, without giving the least sign of impatience or haste, or without doing the least act that tended to remind the others, that he was there waiting for any thing, but evidently meaning to be heard before he went away. He would willingly have dismissed him, and that without ceremony, but to turn away a capuchin without giving him audience was not a part of his policy. Since it was not practicable to get out of the way of this annoyance, he determined to face it, and to free himself from it: he therefore rose from table, and with him the whole ruby-faced troop, whilst the clamor was still flourishing. Having apologized to his guests, he drew near to the friar, who had also risen with the rest, with a somewhat proud and reserved air, and said to him, "I am at your orders, father," and conducted him into another room.

CHAPTER VI.

"In what can I be of service to you?" "said Don Rodrigo, stopping in the centre of the room. The friar heard these words, but he felt, from the tone in which they were uttered, that they unequivocally meant, remember in whose presence you are: weigh your words well and make haste.

There was not a surer or more speedy method of raising up the courage of our father Christopher, than by addressing him in an arrogant way. He who was standing in suspense, seeking for words, and running between his fingers the beads of the rosary at his waist, as if he should find his exordium in one of them, at that haughty look and tone, felt the words rushing to his lips faster than he had occasion for them. But immediately reflecting how important it was not to injure his affairs, and what was of greater consequence, those of others, by precipitancy, he chastened and tempered the expressions which presented themselves to his mind, and answered with a circumspect humility, "I come here to propose to you an act of justice, and to supplicate charity at your hand. Some persons of indifferent respect with the world, have made use of your illustrious name, to intimidate a poor curate, to prevent him from fulfilling his duty, that they may trample upon two innocent young people. With one word you can confound these men, replace every thing in its former state, and protect those to whom so great an injury has been done. This is in your power, and that being so, conscience, honor——"

"You can talk to me about my conscience, when I shall think proper to ask for your opinion. As to my honor, it seems you have to learn that I am its guardian, I alone; and whoever dares to busy himself with dividing that charge with me, I regard him as a rash man who insults me."

Brother Christopher, aware by these words that Don Rodrigo would purposely put the worst construction on his words, in order to turn the conversation into a dispute, and thus prevent him from coming to the point, determined still more to be on his guard, and to submit quietly to any thing that might be said

to him; he therefore with a subdued tone replied, "If I have said any thing that is displeasing to you, certainly it has been contrary to all my intentions. Correct me, reprehend me, if I do not know how to speak as becomes me to do, but deign to listen to me. For the love of Heaven, for his sake before whom we must all appear." Saying this, he lifted before the eyes of his frowning auditor the small wooden skull pending from his rosary, "Do not persist in refusing a justice so easy, and so much due to the poor creatures. Reflect that God has his eyes always upon them, and that their imprecations are listened to by him above. Innocence is powerful in his——"

"Father," rudely interrupted Don Rodrigo, "the respect I bear to your habit is great, but if any thing could induce me to forget it, it would be the sight of it on one who should be bold enough to act the spy in my own house."

These words brought the color into the cheeks of the friar, but with the air of a man who swallows the bitterest medicine, he ananswered. "You do not believe that such a term belongs to me. You feel in you heart that the act in which I am now engaged, is not vile nor to be despised. Hear me, Don Rodrigo, and may Heaven grant that the day may not come when you repent that you have not listened to me. I will not set up your glory. What glory, Don Rodrigo! what glory before men and before God! You are powerful in this world, but——"

"Do you know," said Don Rodrigo, interrupting him with anger, not altogether unmixed with apprehension. "Do you know that when the whim seizes me to hear a sermon, I know how to go to church as well as others? But in my own house! oh!" and with a forced contemptuous smile he added, "you are taking me for a greater personage than I am. A preacher in my establishment! None but princes have them."

"And that God who asks of princes an account of that word which he makes them hear in their palaces, that God who does an act of mercy to you in sending one of his ministers—unworthy and miserable, but yet his minister—to pray for an innocent——"

"In short, father," said Don Rodrigo, making a motion to leave the room, "I do not comprehend what you mean; all I can make out is, that there is some young girl you take an interest in. Go and tell your secrets to whom you like, but do not have the assurance to annoy further a gentleman with them."

At the movement of Don Rodrigo, the friar also moved, and placing himself reverently before him, and raising his hands as if to supplicate and detain him, he replied, "that I take an interest in her, it is true, but not a greater than I take in yourself; your two souls are more precious to me than my own blood. Don Rodrigo! for you I can do no more than offer up my prayers, but this I will do from my heart. Do not say no to me; let not that poor innocent girl be kept in terror and anguish. One word from you will be sufficient."

"Well," said Don Rodrigo, "since you think I can do so much for this person, since you have her so much at heart—"

"Well!" anxiously exclaimed the friar, to whom the action and manner of Don Rodrigo, did not permit him to abandon himself altogether to the hope that these words seemed to inspire."

"Well, advise her to come and put herself under my protection. She shall want for nothing, and no one shall dare to give her any trouble, or I am not a cavalier."

At such a proposition, the repressed indignation of the friar, which had struggled within him, broke loose. All his fine resolutions about prudence and patience, vanished: the old man was perfectly in accord with the new one, and upon such emergencies brother Christopher was really worth two. "Your protection!" he exclaimed, retreating two paces, fixing himself fiercely upon his right foot, his right hand resting upon his hip, raising his left with the forefinger extended towards Don Rodrigo, and fixing in his face two eyes of fire, "Your protection! It is well you have spoken thus, that you have made such a proposition to me. You have filled the measure, and I fear you no more."

"What language is this, friar?"

"It is the language of a man which he addresses to one who is abandoned by God, and can inspire fear no longer. Your protection! I knew well that the innocent creature lived under the protection of God; but you, you make me feel it with so much certainty, that I no longer need measure, by deference to you, what I have to say. Lucia, I say; see with what a lofty front I pronounce that name, and with what immoveable eyes—"

"How! in this house?"

"I have compassion upon this house; a curse is suspended over it. You expect that the justice of God will respect its four walls, and they contain bandits! You have believed that God has made a creature after his own image, to give you the pleasure of tormenting her! You have believed that God would not know how to defend her! You have despised his counsel! You have pronounced judgment on yourself. The heart of Pharoah was hardened as much as yours, and yet God has known how to break it in pieces. Lucia is secure from you; I tell you so! I, a poor friar; and as to yourself, hear distinctly what I promise to you. A day will come——"

Don Rodrigo up to this moment had remained in a state of astonishment and rage, not being able to utter a word, but when he heard the intonation of a prediction, a remote and mysterious dread was associated with his anger. He grasped suddenly the menacing hand that was in the air, and raising his voice to overpower that of the fatal prophet, cried out, "Begone from my presence, audacious rustic. idle cowl bearing——"

These words, so very precise, tamed father Christopher in a moment. To the idea of insult and abuse, that of suffering and of silence had been so thoroughly and for so long a period associated in his mind, that at the very hearing of these compliments, every spark of anger and enthusiasm vanished, and no other resolution remained, save that of tranquilly listening to every thing Don Rodrigo might please to add. Wherefore, having quietly withdrawn his hand from the grasp of the cavalier, he drooped his head, and remained immovable; just as an ancient tree, at the sinking of the wind, after the fury of the hurricane, recomposes naturally its leaves, and receives the hail as it pleases Heaven to send it.

"Thou doubly coarse peasant!" pursued Don Rodrigo, "thou actest like one of thy kind. But give thanks to the stuff that covers thy beggar's shoulders, and which protects thee from the caresses which are given to thy equals, to teach them how to behave. Let thy limbs take thee away for this time, and let me see thee depart."

Thus saying, he pointed with imperious contempt, to a door opposite to that by which they entered; father Christopher lowered his head, and went out, leaving Don Rodrigo to measure, with agitated steps, the field of battle.

When the friar had closed the door behind him, he saw in the room where he now was, a man gliding gently along the wall, so as not to be seen from the room where this colloquy was held, and recognized in him the old servant who had received him on his arrival at the house. He had lived here forty years, that is from the year of Don Rodrigo's birth, being then in the service of his father, a man of very different habits and character. At his death, the new master, dismissing all the old establishment, and getting a new set together, had nevertheless retained this man, who, although old, and brought up in habits and tastes very different from his own, compensated for their deficiency by two qualities: a prodigious conceit of the dignity of the house, and extensive practical knowledge of ceremonial etiquette, a branch, the most ancient traditions, and the most minute particulars of which, he was better acquainted with than any other. To his master's face, the poor old man would not have dared to risk any sign, much less to express, his disapprobation of what he saw taking place every day: scarce did he hazard an observation, or mutter out a reproof to his fellow-servants, than they turned it into a joke, and drawing him into a dispute, provoked him into long sermons, and eulogiums upon the ancient manner of living under that roof. His censures when they came to the ears of his master were always accompanied with a relation of the laughs raised against the old man, so that the mockery they excited was without resentment. On days of invitation and reception, the ancient servant was a personage of serious and great importance.

Father Christopher gave him a look in passing, saluted him, and went on; but the old man drew to his side mysteriously, placed his finger on his mouth, and beckoned him to accompany him into an obscure passage. When they were there, he said to him, in an under voice, "Father, I have heard it all, and I must speak with you."

"Good man, speak at once."

"Not here. Wo, if the master should perceive. But I shall find many things out, and I will endeavor tomorrow to come to the convent."

"Is there any plan on foot?"

"There is something or other going on certainly, I have already perceived that. But now I will be on the alert, and will find it all out. Leave me to act. I can see and hear things—things of fire! I am in a house——! But I would save my soul,"

"May God bless you!" and gently uttering these words, the friar placed his hand upon the head of the servant, who although older than himself, stood bent before him in the attitude of a son. "God will reward you," pursued the friar, "do not fail to come tomorrow."

"I will come," replied he, "but depart immediately, and, for the love of Heaven, do not betray me." Saying this, and looking around, he went out by the other end of the passage, into a little hall that led to the court yard, and seeing the way free, he called the good friar out, whose countenance gave to his last words, a better assurance of fidelity than protestations could have done. The old man pointed out the gate to him, and the friar took his departure.

That servant had been listening at the door of his master. Was that well done? And did father Christopher act right in praising him? According to universally received maxims, the act was a very dishonest one; but ought not this case to be considered as an exception. And next, are there any exceptions to be made to these maxims?

These are questions the reader must decide for himself if he likes. We do not intend to give any decision, it suffices us to have facts to relate.

Once more on the road, and his back turned upon that den, brother Christopher breathed more freely, and he hastened down the descent, his face flushed, agitated, and disturbed, as may well be imagined, by what he had heard, and by what he had himself said. But this unexpected offer on the part of the servant, was a great cordial to him; it seemed as if Heaven held out a visible sign of protection. Here is a thread, thought he—a thread, which Providence puts into my hand. And in that very house itself! and without my even dreaming to look for it! Thus ruminating, he raised his eyes to the west as the declining sun was hovering upon the summit of the mountain, and reflected that the day was almost spent. Although his limbs began to be

wearied and dull, with the unusual fatigues of the day, he quickened his pace, that he might give such information as he possessed to those under his protection, and reach the convent before night. This was one of their most absolute laws, and rigorously insisted upon in the capuchin code.

In the mean time in the cottage of Lucia some plans had been brought forward and examined, of which we must give the reader information. After the departure of the friar, the three persons he had left behind, had preserved silence for some time. Lucia sorrowfully preparing the dinner; Renzo, between them both, moving himself away every instant to avoid contemplating her in her distress; Agnes to all appearance intent upon the reel she was turning, though in reality she was maturing a thought, and when it was ready she broke silence in these terms:

"Listen, children! If you will be courageous and dexterous at the proper time, if you confide in your mother," that word *your*, made Lucia jump, "I engage to get you out of this difficulty, better perhaps and quicker than father Christopher, although he is the man that he is." Lucia stopped, and looked at her with a countenance expressive of more surprise than faith at such a magnificent promise, and Renzo hastily said, "Courage? dexterity? speak, what can be done?"

"Is'nt it true, that if you were married it would be one great point gained? And that for the rest a remedy could be more easily found?"

"Can there be any doubt?" said Renzo, "once married—all the world is a country, and two steps from here, there at Bergamo, any one who can work at silk is received with open arms. You know how often my cousin Bartolo has asked me to go and live with him, that I should make my fortune, as he has done, and if I have never listened to him, it is—what signifies? It is because my heart was here. Once married, we could all go together, have a house there, live in blessed peace, out of the claws of this monster, far from the temptation to act foolishly. Is it not true, Lucia?"

"Yes," said Lucia, "but how——?"

"As I have said," continued Agnes, "courage and address, and the thing is easy."

"Easy," both exclaimed at the same time, to whom the affair had become so strangely and so painfully difficult.

"Easy, knowing how to do it," replied Agnes. "Hear me, and I will try to make you understand. I have heard said by those who know, and indeed one case I have seen, that where there is a marriage there must be a curate, but it is not necessary he should consent to it, it is only necessary he should be present."

"How is this matter?" asked Renzo.

"Listen, and you will find out. There must be two witnesses, both of them sharp and agreeing together. Away you go to the parish priest, the thing is to catch him unexpectedly, before he has time to escape. The man says, 'signor curate, this is my wife;' the woman says, 'signor curate, this is my husband.' But the curate must hear this, and the witnesses must hear it, and then the marriage is as good and as conclusive, and as holy as if the pope had blessed it. When the words are said, the curate may storm, and scold, and go on like the devil—it amounts to nothing; you are then husband and wife."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Lucia.

"How!" said Agnes, "do you think that in the thirty years I have been in this world before you both, I have learnt nothing at all? The matter is just as I have said it, and so true it is, that a friend of mine that wanted to marry a man against the will of her parents, making use of this method, obtained her wishes. The curate, who had some suspicion, was on the alert, but the two devils did it so neatly, that they came upon him in the very nick of time, said the words, and were husband and wife; although the poor thing repented of it three days after."

The affair, in fact, was as Agnes had represented it; marriages contracted in that manner, were at that period, and even down to our own days, held to be valid. But as no one had recurrence to such an expedient, but who had met with a refusal to have the ceremony performed in the ordinary way, the parish priests were very careful to get out of the way of these involuntary sanctions, and when any of them was surprised by a couple accompanied with witnesses, they tried every expedient to get away from them, as Proteus did from the hands of those who wanted to make him prophecy by force.

"If it was true, Lucia!" said Renzo, looking at her with a face of supplicating expectation.

"How! if it was true!" returned Agnes, "do you think I am telling idle stories. Here I am, in a peck of troubles on your account, and you won't believe me. Well, well, get out of your own difficulties after your own method; I wash my hands of them."

"Ah, no! do not abandon us," said Renzo. "I say so because the thing appears to me too good. I am in your hands, I look upon you as if you was my own mother in truth."

These words dissipated the vexation of Agnes, and made her forget an exclamation, which, in truth, meant nothing at all.

"But why, then, mamma," said Lucia, with her submissive manner, "why did not this plan come into the head of father Christopher?"

"Into his head?" answered Agnes; "just think if it did not come into his head! But he would not mention it."

"Why?" exclaimed the young people, both at once.

"Why? why, since you will know it, religious men say, that truly, it is not right of itself."

"How can it be that it is not right, and yet

be good and conclusive, when it is done?" said Renzo.

"What is it you want me to say to you?" replied Agnes. "Others have made the law just as they pleased, and we poor people can't understand every thing. And then how many things—see! it's like giving a blow to a Christian; that is not right, but when once he has got it, the pope himself can't take it away again."

"If it is a thing that is not right in itself," said Lucia, "it ought not to be done."

"What!" said Agnes, "am I the person, perhaps, to give you an opinion against the fear of God? If it was against the will of thy parents, to take up with some dissolute fellow; but content me, it is to be united with this good lad; and he who makes the disturbance is a scoundrel, and the curate——"

"It is as clear as the sun," said Renzo.

"You must not tell father Christopher, before you do it," pursued Agnes, "but when it is done, and has succeeded, what do you think the good father will say to you? 'Ah, daughter! this is a strange prank you have played off.' The religious men always talk so. But, in his heart, you may be quite sure he will be content."

Lucia, without finding any thing to answer to this reasoning, did not appear, however, much convinced by it; but Renzo, quite renovated, said, "This being the case, the thing is concluded upon."

"Softly," said Agnes, "and the witnesses? and the means to surprise the curate, who for these last two days is hid away in his house? And how to keep him there? For although he is clumsy by nature, I can tell you when he sees you coming in that fashion, you will find him as nimble as a cat; and he will run off as fast as the devil would from holy water."

"I have found the means—I have found it," said Renzo, thumping his fist on the table, and making the little dishes dance again, that were to serve for the dinner; and then went on explaining his idea, which Agnes approved in every particular.

"These are wild notions," said Lucia, "and things are not at all clear. We have acted until now with sincerity; let us go on in good faith, and God will help us: father Christopher has said so. Let us hear his opinion."

"Be governed by those who know," said Agnes, with a grave countenance. "What occasion is there to ask opinions? God says, 'help yourself, and I will help you.' We can tell the father every thing, when it is all over."

"Lucia," said Renzo, "will you fail me now? Have not we done every thing, like good Christians? Ought not we to have been husband and wife? Did not the curate, himself, fix the day, and the hour? And whose fault is it if we are now obliged to use a little management? No. you will not fail me. I am going, and I will return with the answer." And, saluting Lucia in a supplicating manner, and Agnes with a look of intelligence, he departed in haste.

Trouble, it is said, gives a spur to invention; and Renzo, who in the straight and smooth path of life trod by him until now, had never found himself obliged much to sharpen his own, upon this occasion had conceived something worthy of a *juris consult.* He went immediately, in furtherance of his plan, to the cottage, nigh at hand, of one Tonio. Him he found in the kitchen, his knee resting upon a little bench on the hearth, his right hand upon the brim of a pot placed on the hot ashes, and the other mixing up, with a crooked pestle, a small gray mess of buckwheat pudding. Tonio's mother, brother, and wife were seated at the table, and three or four children standing round it, watching, with their eyes fixed upon the pot, the moment when the pudding was to be turned out. But all that cheerfulness which the near prospect of dinner gives to those who have earned it by labor was wanting. The aggregate of the dish was proportioned to the scarcity which prevailed, and not to the number and keen inclinations of the guests; for each of them giving a side look of disappointed welcome to the common resource, seemed to be occupied with the amount of appetite that would survive it. Whilst Renzo was exchanging salutes with the family, Tonio turned out the mess upon a beachen platter, placed on the table to receive it, and which looked like a small moon in the centre of a great circle of vapor. Nevertheless, the women very courteously said to Renzo, "Will you be helped?" a compliment that the peasant of Lombardy never omits to offer to whoever finds him at his repast, even if this last should be some rich glutton just risen from table, and he himself occupied with his last mouthful.

"Thank you," answered Renzo, "I only came to say a word to Tonio; and if you like, Tonio, so that your women may not be disturbed, we will go and dine at the inn, and talk there." The proposition was the more grateful to Tonio, because unexpected; and the women were by no means sorry to see one of the competitors for the pudding, and he the most formidable of all, withdrawn. Tonio waited for no further invitation, and went away with Renzo.

Arrived at the village inn, and both seated at their ease in perfect solitude, for misery had weaned all the frequenters of that place of delights from it, and having had what little matters that were to be obtained, and emptied a flask of wine, Renzo, with an air of mystery, said to Tonio, "If you will do me a small service, I will render you a great one."

"Speak, speak, command me freely," answered Tonio, pouring out some wine, "I would go through fire for you to day."

"You are indebted to the curate twenty-five livres for the rent of the field you tilled last year."

"Ah! Renzo, Renzo, you have spoiled all

your kindness. What a subject to talk to me about! You have put down all my desire to serve you."

"If I said any thing about thy debt," said Renzo, "it was because, if you wish it, I intend to furnish thee the means of paying it."

"Dost thou speak in earnest?"

"Yes, I do. Eh! would you like that?

"Like it, by Diana! I should like it indeed, if it was only that I might see no more of those queer faces and shakings of the head, that the curate puts on every time I meet him. And then always, 'Tonio—remember—Tonio! when shall we see each other about that little affair.' And when he is preaching, and happens to cast his eye at me, he always makes me frightened lest he should call out—'I say, Tonio, about them twenty-five livres?' Curses on the twenty-five livres, I say! And then he would have to give me back the gold necklace belonging to my wife, which I would turn into so much polenta.* But——"

"But, but, if you will render me a small service the twenty-five livres are ready for you."

"Say what it is."

"But," said Renzo, putting his fore finger on his lip, so as to make the form of a cross.

"What need is there of that? You know me."

"The curate pretends to give certain reasons, without sense in them, to delay my marriage, and I want to hasten it. They tell me, for a certain, that when a couple goes before him with two witnesses, and I saying, this is my wife, and Lucia saying, this is my husband, the matrimony is done and concluded. Do you understand me?"

"You want me to be one of your witnesses?"

"Yes."

"And you will pay the twenty-five livres for me?"

"That is what I mean."

"Call me a rogue if I don't."

"But we must find another witness."

"I have got one. That poor devil of a brother of mine, Gervaso, will do whatever I tell him. You will pay for something to drink for him?"

"And to eat too," said Renzo. "We'll bring him here to make merry with us; but will he know how?"

"I'll teach him. You know I have got his share of brains."

"Tomorrow!"

"Well."

"Towards evening."

"Very well."

"But!" said Renzo, putting his fore finger on his lip again.

"Poh!" answered Tonio, jerking his head over his left shoulder, and bringing up his left hand with a grimace that seemed to say, you do me wrong.

"But if thy wife asks thee any thing, as she no doubt will?"

"I am in my wife's debt so many lies, aye, and so many of them, that I don't know if ever I shall get the account settled with her. I'll find some fine story or other to put her heart at ease."

"Tomorrow," said Renzo, "we'll arrange the affair better, so that it may be well done."

They now left the village inn, Tonio taking his way home, and contiving on the road some story or other to amuse his women with, and Renzo retracing his steps to give an account of what he had done.

In the mean time Agnes had in vain endeavored to persuade her daughter, who, at every reason given her, opposed first one, then another part of her dilemma. Either the thing is not right, and then ought not to be done; or it is right, and then why not tell it to father Christopher?

Renzo arrived full of satisfaction, made his report, and finished it with an *ahn*, a Milanese interjection, which signifies, am I or am I not a man? Could a cleverer be found? Would that have come into any body else's head? and a hundred similar things.

Lucia shook her head gently, but the two enthusiasts paid little attention to her, as people do with children whom they do not expect to make understand the whole reason of any thing, but that may be induced afterwards by entreaties and by authority, to do what is wished of them.

"So far, so good," said Agnes, "so far so good. But you have not thought of every thing."

"What is wanting," answered Renzo.

"And Perpetua? you have not thought of Perpetua. She would let Tonio and his brother enter, but you! you two! think of that! she will have orders to keep you as far away as boys from a tree with ripe pears on it."

"What shall we do?" said Renzo, thoughtfully.

"Let me see a moment, whilst I think about that. I will go with you, and I have a secret to draw her off, and to keep her in such a state of wonderment that she will not think of you, and so you can get in. I'll call her, and I'll touch such a chord; you shall see."

"A blessing on you," said Renzo, "I have always said that you are our help in every thing."

"But all this serves to nothing," said Agnes, "if you can't persuade her there, who is obstinate in persisting that it is a sin."

Renzo now brought into the field more of his eloquence, but Lucia could not be persuaded.

"I don't know what to say to your reasons," said she, "but I see, to proceed as you want to do, we can't get on without underhand contrivances, and lies, and fictions. Ah, Renzo! we did not begin so. I wish to be your wife,—" and she could not get out the word, or express her honest wish, without her coun-

* A mess made of Indian corn meal or any other.

tenance being suffused, "I wish to be your wife, but in a straight forward way, with the fear of God, at the altar. Let us be guided by the friar. Does not he know better how to extricate us, than we can possibly do with all these crooked contrivances? Why should we use any mystery with father Christopher?"

The dispute still continued, and was not in a way to terminate, when a hurried noise of sandals, and the flapping of a tunic, like that which the puffs of wind make in a slackened sail, announced father Christopher. They became silent, and Agnes had scarce time to whisper into the ear of Lucia, "Be careful you don't tell him."

CHAPTER VII.

Father Christopher arrived in the attitude of a good captain, who without any fault of his own, has lost an important battle, afflicted but not discouraged, full of thought but not astounded, under sail but not in flight, directing his course where necessity requires, to caution places which are threatened, to arrange his troops, and to give new orders.

"Peace be with you," said he, entering. "There is nothing to hope from the man; so much the more it behoves us to confide in God, and already I have some pledge of his protection."

Although not one of the three hoped much from the attempt of father Christopher, since to see a powerful man recede from a fraud, without being compelled to do so by a superior power, and through pure condescension to unarmed entreaties, was a thing rather unheard of than rare, nevertheless the certainty of the disappointment was a blow to them all. The women hung down their heads, but in Renzo, anger was predominant over his abasement. This information found him already embittered and irritated, by a suite of painful surprises, of disappointed attempts, of deluded hopes, and above all, soured at that moment by the dissatisfaction of Lucia.

"I should like to know," he cried out, grinding his teeth and raising his voice more than he had ever yet ventured to do before father Christopher, "I should like to know what reasons that hound has given, to sustain—to sustain that my bride is not to be my bride."

"Poor Renzo!" replied the friar, with an accent of pity, and with a look that benevolently commanded peaceableness, "If the powerful man who wants to commit injustice, was always obliged to give his reasons, things would not go as they do."

"The dog then has said, that he won't. Why will he not?"

"He has not even said so much, poor Renzo! It would be an advantage, if to commit iniquity, it was necessary to confess it openly."

"But something he must have said; what did he say, that firebrand of hell?"

"His words I have heard, yet cannot repeat them to thee. The words of the wicked man, when he is powerful, penetrate, yet disappear. He can become angry if you appear to suspect him, and at the same time make you feel that which you suspect him of is true; he can insult, and say that he is offended, laugh at you and ask an apology; alarm you and complain of you, be audacious and yet be without blame. Ask no further. That man never uttered the name of this innocent nor thine own, he did not let it appear that he even knew you, he did not say that he pretended to any thing; but—but, I saw too well that he was immoveable. Nevertheless, confidence in God! You, poor things, be not cast down; and thou, Renzo—oh, believe me, I can place myself in thy situation, and can feel what is passing in thy heart. But patience! it is a meagre word, a bitter word, to him who believes not; but thou—! wilt thou not grant to God one day, two days, the time that he requires to bring down from above what is right again? Time is his, and he has promised us so much! Leave it to him, Renzo, and know—know all of ye, that I have hold of a thread to aid you. At present I can tell you no more. Tomorrow, I cannot return here, I must remain in the convent all day on your account. Do thou, Renzo, endeavor to come, and if by some unforeseen circumstance, thou art not able, send a faithful man, a youth of some judgment, by whom I can make you acquainted with what has occurred. Night is approaching, and I must hasten to the convent. Faith and courage! and a good evening."

Having said this, he hastily took his leave, and went away, hastening down the crooked and stoney path that he might not arrive late at the convent, at the risk of getting a good scolding, or what would have troubled him more, of having a penitence imposed upon him, which would have prevented him the next day from being ready for whatever might occur for the service of his young friends.

"Did you hear what he said of a—I do not know what—a thread that he has hold of to aid us?" said Lucia. "We must trust in him, he is a man who when he promises ten——"

"If that's all," interrupted Agnes, "he should have spoken plainer, or at least should have taken me on one side, and told me what it is he——"

"This is all nothing but talk! I'll put an end to it! I'll put an end to it!" exclaimed Renzo in his turn, passing furiously up and down the room, and with a voice, and with a countenance to leave little room to doubt in what sense he intended these words.

"Oh, Renzo!" cried out Lucia.

"What is it you mean?" said Agnes.

"What is the use of telling? I'll put an end to it. If he has a hundred—a thousand devils in his soul, at best he is but flesh and bone himself."

"No, no, for the love of Heaven—!" Lucia began, but tears choked her voice.

"You should not talk so, even when you are in jest," said Agnes.

"Jest!" screamed out Renzo, stopping immediately in front of Agnes who was seated, and fixing a pair of rolling eyes in her face; "Jest! you shall see if its a jest."

"Oh, Renzo!" said Lucia, with difficulty amidst her sobs, "I have never seen you so."

"Dont repeat these things for the love of Heaven," said Agnes hurriedly, and lowering her voice. "Dont you remember how many we are ready to assist you? And besides—God deliver us!—there is always justice for the poor."

"I'll do justice, myself; I! its full time I think! The thing is not easy, I know that myself. The murderous dog goes about well protected; he knows what he ought to expect, but that is nothing. Patience and resolution—and the moment will come. Yes, I'll do justice myself, I'll free the country! How many will bless me—! And then in four jumps, I'll——"

The horror which Lucia experienced at this very plain declaration, stopped her weeping, and gave her courage to speak; removing her hands from her tearful countenance, she said to Renzo, with a sorrowful voice, yet still resolute;

"You don't care then, about having me for your wife? I had betrothed myself to a youth who lived in the fear of God—but—a man who had—even if he was safe, and out of the reach of justice and vengeance, if he was the son of a king——"

"Well!" cried out Renzo, with his countenance still more disordered, "You will not be mine, but neither shall you be his. I shall live here without you, and he will be in a place——"

"Ah, no, for mercy's sake, don't talk so, don't roll your eyes so; no, I cannot see you thus," she exclaimed, weeping, imploring and clasping her hands. Agnes in the meanwhile, repeatedly called the youth by his name, patted his shoulders, his arms, and his hands, to pacify him. He stood immoveable, thoughtful, and at one instant almost moved by the supplicating countenance of Lucia; then suddenly giving her a terrible look, he drew back, extended his arm and finger towards her, and broke out, "She! yes, it is her he wants. He shall die!"

"And I, what evil have I done to you, that you should cause me to die too?" said Lucia, casting herself at his knees.

"You!" said he, with a voice that expressed a different sort of resentment, but still an irritated feeling, "You! what good do you wish me? What proof of it have you given me? Have I not entreated you, and entreated you, and entreated you? Have I been able to obtain—?" "Yes, yes," answered Lucia, with precipitation, "I will go to the curate's tomorrow; now, if you wish, I will go. Only take that first thing back, I will go."

"Do you promise me?" said Renzo, with a tone and countenance at once become more humane.

"I promise you."

"You have promised me."

"Oh, Lord, I thank thee!" exclaimed Agnes, doubly content. In the midst of his choler, had Renzo perceived the advantage he could draw from the dread of Lucia? And had he not put in operation a little artifice to increase it, that he might draw some benefit from it? Our author protests to know nothing on this head, and I am of opinion that neither did Renzo himself know very well. The truth is, that he was enraged with Don Rodrigo, and was full of ardor to obtain the consent of Lucia; now when two strong passions are striving together in the heart of a man, no one, not even a patient one, can always distinguish clearly the voice of one from the voice of the other, and determine with certainty which of them predominates.

"I have promised you," said Lucia with an accent of reproach, at once timid and affectionate, "but you too have promised not to cause any scandal, and to be governed by the friar——"

"Oh come! For the love of whom do I get into a rage? Do you want to retract? and make me do some rash——"

"No, no," said Lucia, ready to resume her apprehensions, "I have promised, and do not retract. But see what you have made me promise. God will not——"

"Why will you make such evil auguries, Lucia? God knows we are injuring no one."

"Promise me at least, that this shall be the last,"

"I do promise you on the word of a poor lad."

"But mind you keep your word this time," said Agnes.

Here the author confesses his ignorance of another matter; whether Lucia was absolutely and quite entirely dissatisfied that she had been thus obliged to give her consent. Like him, we leave the thing in doubt.

Renzo might have prolonged the conversation, and arranged minutely what was to be done the following day; but it was already dark, and the women wished him good night, it not appearing to them proper that he should remain there any later.

The night however, passed in as goodly a manner to all three, as a night can which succeeds to a day full of agitation and distress, and which precedes another destined to an important enterprise of uncertain termination. Renzo made his appearance at an early hour, and concerted with the women, or rather with Agnes the great operation of the evening, conjuring up and conquering difficulties by turns, foreseeing obstacles, and beginning, first one and then the other, to describe the undertaking, just as they would have narrated a thing already executed. Lucia listened, and without openly approving that which in her heart

she could not approve, promised to do the best that she could.

"Will you go down to the convent, to speak to father Christopher, as he told you to do yesterday evening?" Agnes asked of Renzo.

"Speak to him, indeed!" answered he, "you know what prying eyes the father has got; he would read in my face just as he does in a book, that there's something going on; and if he should begin to ask me questions, I should not come off well. Besides I must remain here to keep things right. It will be better for you to send some one."

"I'll send Menico."

"Very well," answered Renzo, and went to look after matters as he had said.

Agnes went to a neighboring house to seek for Menico, a boy of about twelve years old, sharp enough, and by way of cousins and other relationship, a sort of nephew of hers. She asked him of his parents as a sort of loan for the whole day, for a certain service she said. And having obtained him, conducted him to her kitchen, gave him some refreshment, and told him to go to Pescarenico, and present himself to father Christopher, who would send him back with an answer, at the proper time. "Father Christopher, that handsome old man, thou knowest, with the white beard, that they call the saint——"

"I know," said Menico, "he that takes notice of the boys and caresses them, and gives them sometimes an image."

"The very same, Menico. And if he tells thee to wait awhile near the convent, don't go away. Mind and don't go with the other boys to the lake to play at ducks and drakes with stones, nor to see them fish, nor to play with the nets hung to the wall to dry, nor——"

"Oh! aunt, I am not such a child."

"Well, be prudent, and when you come back with an answer——see, I will give you these two nice new parpagliole.*

"Give them to me now——"

"No, no, you would be playing them. Go and behave thyself and I will give thee still more."

The remainder of that long morning, certain novelties occurred which infused a good deal of suspicion into the already disturbed minds of the women. A beggar, not a complete and ragged one, as they usually were, but with something dark and sinister in his countenance, entered the house, asked for alms in God's name, and cast his eyes about as if he was spying. A piece of bread was brought to him which he received and put away with an ill concealed indifference. He kept remaining too, with a sort of impudence, and at the same time with hesitation, making a great many inquiries, to which Agnes always hastily gave him answers the very reverse of the fact. Moving, as if he were going to depart, he pretended to miss the door, and went through another which led to the staircase, and examined the premises in haste, as well as he could. They called to him, "Where are you going, honest man? Eh! this is the way." Upon which he returned, and went out at the door that was pointed out to him, excusing himself with a submission and pretended humility, that he made an effort to call up in his hard and fierce countenance. After him, several other strange figures appeared, from time to time. What kind of men they were, it would have been difficult to find out, but it was not possible to believe they were the honest travelers they wished to appear. One entered under the pretext of asking the road; others slackened their pace when they were opposite the door, and cast glances across the court yard into the room, as if they wanted to see without exciting suspicion. Finally, towards midday, the troublesome procession of them was over. Agnes rose now and then, crossed the court yard, went to the street, and returned saying, "There is no more of them," words that she uttered, and that Lucia heard, with pleasure, without either the one or the other knowing very clearly why. But there remained with both of them an unaccountable perturbation, which overcame, in a great measure, and principally with the daughter, the courage they had kept in reserve for the evening.

The reader, however, ought to have some more precise information respecting those mysterious ramblers, and that he may have it in some order, we must turn back a step and find Don Rodrigo, whom we left yesterday after dinner, alone in a hall of his palace, at the departure of father Christopher.

Don Rodrigo, as we have said, was measuring backwards and forwards with long strides, the hall, on the walls of which were hanging family portraits, of various generations.—When he came with his face up to the wall, and was about to turn, he saw himself fronted by one of his warlike ancestors, the terror of his enemies, and of his soldiers, fierce in his looks, his short hair shaggy upon the front, his mustachios drawn out in points and standing out from his cheeks, his chin oblique. The hero was at full length, his legs, his thighs, his body, his arms, his hands, all cased in iron, his right hand placed upon his flank, and his left resting upon the pommel of his sword. Don Rodrigo looked at the figure, and when he turned, beheld in front another ancestor, a magistrate, the terror of litigants, seated upon a lofty chair of red velvet, wrapped in a dark toga, quite black, except a broad white collar, and a lining of ermine. (The distinct costume of a Senator, only worn in the winter; and this is the reason why portraits of men having the senatorial dignity are never seen in their summer dress.) The countenance was pale, the brows frowning: in his hand he held a memorial, and appeared to say "We shall see." Here was a matron, the terror of her damsels, here an abbot, the dread of his monks—all of them, finally, individuals

* A small coin with a butterfly impressed on it.

who had inspired terror, and whose pictures still excited that feeling. In the presence of so many mementos, Don Rodrigo became still more enraged; he felt humiliated, and knew no peace, because a friar had had the insolence to throw in his teeth the old saying of Nathan. He formed plans of vengeance, then abandoned them; considered at the same moment how he could gratify his passion, and vindicate what he called his honor; and sometimes (mark this!) he felt a shudder come over him, with the beginning of that prophecy in his ears, that almost induced him to abandon altogether either of the feelings that agitated him. At length, to do something, he called a servant and ordered him to make his apologies to his guests, and say that he was detained by urgent affairs. When the servant returned to say the gentlemen were gone leaving their adieus, "And Count Attilio?" asked Don Rodrigo, still pacing up and down.

"He went out with the gentlemen, illustrious sir."

"Well. Six persons of my suite for a walk. My sword, my cloak, and hat, immediately,"

The servant left the room, bowing, and soon returned with a rich sword that his master put on, a cloak that he threw on his shoulders, and with a hat with tall plumes, that he carried fiercely to his head, the sign of a swelling sea. Having reached the door, he found his six bullies there, all armed, who, bowing, and making room for him, fell into his rear. More sullen, more haughty, more frowning than usual, he left the house and followed the road to Lecco. The rustics, the artisans, who saw him approach, drew near to the wall, and began taking off their hats, and making profound bows, which by him were altogether unnoticed. Those who were esteemed of the better class also bowed to him as his inferiors, for in the whole neighborhood there was not one, who could compete with him in name, in riches, in adherents, and in the disposition to avail himself of all these advantages, to maintain his superiority over them. Men of this class he saluted with a reserved condescension. That day it did not so fall out, but when it did happen to him to meet the Spanish Castellan, the bowing was equally profound on both sides: like two potentates, who, having no matter of contention between them, as a matter of expediency, do honor to each other's rank. To get rid of his bad humor, and to drive from his fancy the image of the friar, which still tormented him, by observing faces and actions the reverse of his, he entered that day a house where a party had assembled, and where he was received with that busy and respectful cordiality, reserved for men who are either very much beloved, or very much feared, and when night came on, he returned to his palace. Count Attilio had got back at the same moment; supper was then served, to which Don Rodrigo sat thoughtfully down, and spoke very little.

"Cousin, when will you pay me this wager?" said Count Attilio, with a malicious and jocular air, as soon as the servants had left the room.

"Saint Martin's day is not gone by yet."

"You may as well pay it now, for all the saints' days in the calendar will pass by, before——"

"That's what we have to see yet."

"Cousin, you want to play the politician, but I understand you; and I am so certain I have won the wager, that I am ready to bet another."

"What?"

"That the friar—the friar—how do I know? that friar then has converted you."

"Ah, indeed! that is quite one of your bright thoughts."

"Converted, cousin—converted, I say. I rejoice at it. Do you know that it will be a very moving spectacle to see you all compunction, and with your eyes cast down. And what glory for that old friar! How big he must have felt when he went home. Such fish are not to be caught every day, nor with such a net. Be assured that he will quote you as an example, and when he goes upon some of his missions to a distance, he'll talk of your actions no doubt. I can almost seem to hear him." And here, speaking through his nose, and accompanying his words with a caricatured action, he continued, in a sermonizing tone, "In a part of this world, which out of respect I do not name, there lived, my beloved brethren, and there still lives, a debauched cavalier, more a friend to women than to honest men; and who, being in the habit of doing whatever he liked, had cast his eyes upon——"

"Enough, enough," interrupted Don Rodrigo, half smiling and half annoyed, "If you wish to double the bet, I will indulge you."

"The devil! why have you converted the friar?"

"Do not talk to me of him; and as to the bet, Saint Martin will decide." The curiosity of the Count was piqued; he did not spare his inquiries; but Don Rodrigo evaded them all, referring every thing to the day of decision, and being unwilling on his part to communicate designs which were not in progress, nor even positively determined upon.

The following morning when Don Rodrigo awoke, that small portion of compunction which "A day will come," had brought upon him, had vanished with the dreams of the night, and his anger alone remained, exacerbated by the remorse of that passing weakness. The more recent images of his triumphant walk, of the bows, of the reception he had met, even the jokes of his cousin, had contributed not a little to re-establish his ancient resolution. Scarce was he up, when he caused Griso to be called. "Some famous affair," said the servant to himself, to whom this order was given, for the man who bore that name was nothing less than the chief of the

Bravos—he to whom was entrusted the execution of the most daring and most insolent actions, the confident of the master; a man devoted to him in the strongest way, by gratitude and interest. Guilty of a public homicide, to get out of the reach of justice he had come to implore the protection of Don Rodrigo; and he, receiving him into his service, had shielded him from all persecution. Thus, by engaging to commit every crime that was imposed upon him, he had secured to himself impunity for the other. For Don Rodrigo the acquisition was of no small importance, because Griso, besides being the most valiant, without comparison, of the family, was also a specimen of what his master had been able successfully to achieve against the power of law; so that the strength of his influence became stronger both in fact and in opinion.

"Griso," said Don Rodrigo, "in this conjuncture, I shall see what you are worth. Before tomorrow, that Lucia must be in this palace."

"It shall never be said that Griso draws back from executing any of the commands of his illustrious master."

"Take as many men as you may want, order and dispose as it seems best to you, so that the thing succeeds. But above all things, see that she is not hurt."

"Signor, a little fear—so that she does not make too much noise—we can't do otherwise."

"Fear? I understand—that is inevitable. But do not touch a hair of her head; and especially have a care to observe every respect to her. Have you understood?"

"Signor, we cannot by any means whatever take a flower away from its stalk, and bring it to your Excellency, without disturbing it a little; but nothing but what is quite necessary shall be done."

"Under your responsibility. And—how will you proceed?"

"I was thinking Sir. It is lucky that the cottage is at the head of the village. We want a place to go and keep hid at, and just in the nick there is that ruined building, not far off, in the midst of the fields; that house (your Excellency does not know any thing about such things) is a house that was burnt some years ago, and they have not the means to repair it; they have abandoned it, and now the witches live in it, but it's not Saturday, and I laugh at that. These country people are full of omens, and would not pass any night in the week there for a treasure; so that we can go there and keep snug in safety, since no one will come to spoil our affairs."

"Very well; and then?"

Here Griso began to propose, and Don Rodrigo to discuss, until they had mutually concerted the manner of conducting their enterprize, so that no trace might remain of its authors; the manner too of diverting suspicion by fallacious indications, in an opposite direction; of imposing silence upon poor Agnes; of filling Renzo with such terror, that it might predominate over his grief, and even the idea of having recourse to justice, and of making any complaints; every sort of villany, in short, necessary to the success of the principal villany. We shall leave such matters aside, because, as the reader will see, they are not necessary to understand the story, and we are loth to dwell longer, or to detain him any further by the relation of what took place between such a couple of scoundrels. Let it suffice, that whilst Griso was departing to begin the undertaking, Don Rodrigo called him back, and said, "Listen, if by chance that rash clown should fall into your clutches this evening, it would not be amiss to give him by anticipation a good memorial upon his shoulders. So that the order that will be intimated to him tomorrow to keep quiet, will more certainly produce its effect. But don't go and look for him, that you may not hinder what is of more consequence: do you understand me?"

"Leave it to me," answered Griso, with an obsequious and confident bow, and went away.

The morning was spent in reconnoitering the country. The false beggar who had intruded himself into the cottage was Griso, who came to view the premises: the pretended travelers were his own hounds, to whom, for the execution of his plans, the slightest knowledge of the place was sufficient. And having made their observations, they withdrew themselves, that they might not occasion suspicion.

As soon as they were returned to the palace, Griso rendered an account, settled definitively the plan of the enterprize assigned the parts, and delivered his instructions. All this could not be done without the old servant, who had both his eyes and ears wide open, being aware that there was some great affair machinating. By waiting and asking, catching a hint here and there, expounding some obscure word to himself, and interpreting misterious movements, he at last found out what was going to be done that night. But when he had found it out, night was not far off, and a small vanguard of the bullies had already left the house, to conceal themselves in the dilapidated building. The poor old man, although he felt he was engaged in a dangerous game, still would not fail in his promise. He went out, under the excuse of getting a little air, and in great haste took the road to the convent, to give father Christopher the promised information.

A short time afterwards the other Bravos got in motion, descending the hill separately, by one and two at a time, that they might not seem like one company. Next Griso followed, and nothing remained behind but a litter, which was to be carried, and which was carried to the ruin, after the evening had set in. As soon as they were all assembled, Griso despatched three of them to the village inn; one was to remain at the door to observe the movements in the street, and to watch the mo-

ment when all the inhabitants should be retired: the other two were to remain within playing and drinking, as if to pass the time, and were to keep a good watch too, if any thing was to be found out. Griso with the main body, remained in the ambuscade waiting.

The poor old man was still trotting on, the three explorers arrived at their post, and the sun set, when Renzo came to the women and said to them "Tonio and Gervaso are in the street, I am going to sup with them at the inn, and exactly at ave-maria we will come for you. Be of good courage, Lucia! every thing depends upon a moment." Lucia sighed and answered, "Oh yes, courage," with a voice that contradicted the word.

When Renzo and his two companions arrived at the inn, they found the Bravo already planted as a sentinel, occupying half the doorstead, his back leaning against the door-post, and carefully looking about to the right and to the left, and showing now the white now the black of two ferocious eyes. A flat cap of crimson velvet, placed on one side, covered the half of his tuft, which dividing on his dark brow, terminated in locks fastened behind with a comb in the nape of the neck. In his hand he held a stout cudgel: arms, properly speaking, he did not exhibit, but bylooking in his face only, a child even might have guessed he had as many concealed under his clothes as he could carry.

Renzo being the foremost of the three, when he was near this fellow, showed his intention to enter, but without incommoding himself he looked Renzo steadily in the face; the youth, however, intending to avoid all conversation, as every one would with a critical enterprize to conduct, did not even say, "Will you move a little?" but keeping close to the other door-post, passed in obliquely, side foremost, through the space left by that Cariatide. His two companions found it necessary to perform the same evolution if they meant to enter. As soon as they got in, they saw the other two scoundrelly Bravos, whose voices they had heard, seated at a small table, playing at Mora,* screaming out both together at once, and pouring out first to one and then to the other, from a large flask standing between them. These also examined the new comers, and one of the two particularly, holding out in the air his right hand, with three monstrous fingers spread out, and his mouth gaping to let out a *six* that was just on its journey, observed Renzo keenly, then winked to his companion, and afterwards to the fellow at the door, who answered him with a sign of the head. Renzo somewhat suspicious and uncertain, looked at his two guests, as if he would seek in their faces an interpretation of these grimaces, but their countenances indicated nothing but good appetites. The host looked at him as if to wait his orders, and drawing him into another room nigh at hand, he ordered supper.

"Who are these strangers?" asked Renzo, in a low voice, when he returned to the room, with a coarse napkin under his arm, and a flask in his hand.

"I don't know them," answered the innkeeper, spreading the cloth.

"How, not one of them?"

"You know well," answered he, spreading hastily the cloth on the table, "that the first rule of our trade is never to ask about other people's affairs, so much so, that even our women are not curious. We should be in a pretty box with so many people going and coming. This is always a free port, that is, when the years are tolerable, and we keep ourselves cheerful with the hope that good times will return. It is enough for us that our customers are honest men; who they are, or who they are not, is of no consequence. And now I'll bring you a dish of forced meat, such as you never ate before."

"How can you tell—?" said Renzo, but the host went straight forwards on to his kitchen. There whilst he was attending to the pot containing the forced meat we have spoken of, he was quietly accosted by the ruffian looking fellow who had eyed our youth, and who said, in a low tone, "Who are these good men, here?"

"Some honest folks of the place," replied the innkeeper, turning the meat into a dish.

"That is all right, but what are their names? Who are they?" he inquired in a rather rough tone.

"One of them is named Renzo," answered the host in an under tone, "a good young fellow, a silk thrower, who understands his business. The other is a countryman, called Tonio, a merry, good sort of chap; it is a pity he is but poorly off, if he was not he would spend it all here. The other is a blockhead that is very fond of eating any thing you will give to him. With permission."

Saying this he brushed off between the fire place and the interrogator, and carried the dish where it was expected. "How can you tell," began Renzo again, when he saw him coming, "that they are honest men, when you don't know them?"

"By actions, my dear fellow; man is known by his actions. Those who drink wine without finding any fault with it, who show the King's picture on the table without talking about it, who do not enter into disputes with other customers, and who if they have the thrust of a dirk to spare to any body, go and wait for him out of doors, at a distance from the inn, so that the poor host is not called in question, those are honest men. But you can tell well bred people, just as well as we four know one another, and better. But what the devil are you so curious about, a bridegroom like you ought to have other things running in his head. Come try the mince meat, it would bring a dead man to life again." Having said this, he returned into the kitchen.

* Mora is played by two persons; each throws out one or more fingers, and he who calls out the exact number both throw out, wins.

Our author, speaking of the different language the host held to the parties who interrogated him, observes, that he was a man so constituted, that in his conversation he always professed to be a great admirer of honest men in general, but that in practice he had a great deal more complaisance for those who had either the reputation or the external appearance of rascals. He was, as may be perceived, a man of a singular character.

The supper was not a very merry one. The two guests would have preferred to have enjoyed it more at leisure, but the inviter, preoccupied with what the reader is apprized of, and disturbed, even made unquiet by the strange deportment of these unknown persons, was longing for the hour of departure. On account of these men, they spoke in an under tone, in a broken and restrained manner.

"What a wonderful thing it is," escaped from Gervaso all at once," that Renzo wants to be married, and must have—" Renzo looked at him sternly, "Will you hold your tongue, beast!" said Tonio to him, accompanying the title with a thrust from his elbow. The conversation went on languishing until it stopped. Renzo observing a strict sobriety, pouring out the wine to his witnesses with discretion, so as to make them a little bold, without getting too much in their heads. All being finished, and the account paid by the man that had consumed the least, they had all three to pass again before the bravos, who turned to look at Renzo, as at the first time.

As soon as he had got a few paces from the inn he looked behind, and saw that the two he had left seated in the kitchen, were following him. But they, perceiving themselves observed, also stopped, spoke in an under tone, and turned back. If Renzo had been nigh enough to hear what they said, it would have appeared strange enough to hear as follows:—

"It would be quite an honor, without counting the reward," said one of the villains, "on returning to the palace, to have had to tell that we had flattened his ribs in a hurry, done by ourselves too, without Griso giving us any instructions."

"And so ruin the main part of the affair," replied the other. "See, he is aware of something, he stops to look at us. If it was only a little later! But let us go back, that they may not suspect us. You see people are coming from every quarter, let us let them all go to roost."

There was, in fact, that sort of busy humming noise that is made in villages towards evening, and which after a short time gives place to the solemn tranquillity of night. The women came from the field carrying their young ones on their backs, and leading the older ones, whom they were teaching to repeat the ave-maria, by the hand. The men went trudging along with their spades and hoes on their shoulders. At the opening of their doors, flickering lights were observed from the fires lighted for their meagre suppers. Salutations were exchanged in the street, and short and sorrowful colloquies on the scarcity of the harvest, and the misery of the times; and louder than their voices were heard, the measured and sonorous twangs of the bell that announced the dying day. When Renzo saw that the two prying fellows had retired, he kept on amidst the increasing darkness, reminding, in a low voice, the two brothers, first of one thing, then of another. It was night when they arrived at the cottage of Lucia.

Betwixt the first conception of a terrible undertaking, and its execution, (it has been said by a barbarian not without genius,) the interval is a dream full of phantasms and apprehension. Lucia had been for several hours in the anguish of such a dream; and Agnes, Agnes herself, the contriver of the plan, was thoughtful, and found arguments with difficulty to encourage her daughter. But at the moment of waking up, at the instant when action must begin, the mind has undergone a metamorphosis. To the terror and to the courage which were in conflict, succeed a terror and a courage of another kind; the undertaking presents itself as a new apparition; that which at first appeared most to be dreaded, seems all at once to become practicable; at times a difficulty is magnified, which before was scarce adverted to; the imagination, full of dread, recoils, the limbs refuse their office, and the heart is wanting to those promises it had encouraged with the greatest confidence. At the low knocking of Renzo, Lucia was seized with such terror that she resolved at that moment, to suffer every thing, to remain for ever separated from him, rather than execute the proposed plan; but when he showed himself, and had said, "Here I am, let us go;" when all appeared ready to commence the undertaking without hesitation, as a thing irrevocably fixed, Lucia had neither time nor heart to make any objections; and as if she was dragged, she trembling took an arm of her mother, and an arm of her lover, and went with the adventurous party.

Softly, softly, in the dark, with measured steps, they went out of the door, and took the road that led out of the village. The shortest way would have been to go through it, to reach the other end, where the house of Don Abbondio stood, but they chose this to avoid being seen. By paths among the orchards and fields, they arrived near the house, and here they divided themselves. The betrothed pair remained behind one of the corners, Agnes with them, but a little in advance, to run in time to meet Perpetua and to get hold of her. Tonio with that useless numskull, Gervaso, who was good for nothing by himself, yet without whom nothing could be done, bravely fronted the door, and lifted the knocker.

"Who's there, at this time o'night?" cried out at a voice at the window, which was instantly thrown up; it was Perpetua—"There's nobody sick that I know of. Has any misfortune happened?"

"It's me," answered Tonio, "with my brother, we want to speak with his worship the curate."

"Is this an hour for Christians?" rudely answered Perpetua. "Why, you have got no discretion, return tomorrow."

"Hear—I shall either return or I shall not return. I have got a little money together, and I thought I'd come and pay that old matter you know of. Here's twenty five new pieces, however if I can't pay them, why patience; I know how to get rid of them, and I can come back again when I have got some more together."

"Stop, stop, I'll go and come back again. But why do you come at such an hour?"

"If you can change it for one you like better, why, with all my heart; as for me, here I am, and if you don't want me, well I can go."

"No, no, stop a moment; I'll come back with the answer."

Saying this, she shut the window. Agnes now left the lovers, saying softly to Lucia, "Courage, its only an instant, its like getting a tooth drawn," and joined the two brothers before the door, holding conversation with Tonio in such a way, that when Perpetua should return and see her there, she might think she was passing by only, and that Tonio was merely holding a little talk with her.

CHAPTER VIII.

Carneades! Who was he? Don Abbondio was ruminating with himself in his great arm chair, in a chamber in the upper story, with a small book open before him, when Perpetua entered with the embassy. Carneades! I think I have heard or read of this name; he must have been a man of study, some learned man of the old days; its one of their names; but who the devil was he? So far was the poor man from foreseeing what sort of a storm was going to burst over his head!

The reader must know that Don Abbondio was fond of reading a few lines every day, and a neighboring curate, who had a sort of library, lent him one book after another, the first that came to his hand. The book upon which Don Abbondio was meditating at that moment—being now convalescent of his terror fever, indeed, as far as fever was concerned, more completely cured than he was willing to acknowledge—was a panegyric in honor of Saint Charles, delivered with great emphasis, and heard with much admiration in the Dome of Milan, two years before. The saint was compared, on account of his love of study, to Archimedes, and thus far Don Abbondio, had not been puzzled, because Archimedes has done such great things, and has caused himself to be so much talked of, that without possessing vast erudition, a man may know some little matter about him. But having done with Archimedes, the orator institutes a comparison with Carneades, and here Don Abbondio was completely run ashore. Just at this time, Perpetua announced the visit of Tonio.

"At this hour?" cried he, likewise, as was very natural.

"What will you do? They have no discretion, but if you don't take them when they are flying——"

"If I don't catch him, who knows when I shall catch him? Let him come—Eh! eh! are you quite sure it's him, Tonio?"

"Why, the dickens!" answered Perpetua, and going down stairs, opened the door, saying "where are you?" Tonio came forward, and then Agnes appeared and saluted Perpetua by name.

"Good evening, Agnes," said Perpetua, "where do you come from at this hour?"

"I came from ——" naming a small place in the neighborhood, "and if you only knew," she continued, "I staid rather too long only on your own account."

"Ay, wherefore," inquired Perpetua; and turning to the two brothers, "enter," she said, "I'll go with you."

"Why," resumed Agnes, "it was because one of those women that know nothing, and still will talk——would you believe it? insisted that you was not married to Beppo Suolavecchia, nor to Anselmo Lunghigna, because they would'nt have you. I insisted upon it that you had refused them, both one and t'other——"

"Certainly. Oh the lying slut! the lying minx! Who is she!"

"Don't ask me. I don't like to brew ill——"

"You shall tell me; I will know it; the impudent lying slut."

"Enough—but you cannot believe how vexed I was not to know the whole story just to confound her."

"She is a good for nothing, infamous lying devil!" said Perpetua. "As to Beppo, every body knew and could see—eh! Tonio, shut the door gently and go up stairs, I'll follow you." Tonio answered from within that he would do so, and Perpetua went on with her story in the most impassioned manner.—Fronting the door of Don Abbondio, there was a lane that separated two small houses, and when it had reached their extreme length, turned short round into the fields. Agnes went there, as though she wanted to get to a by place to talk more freely, and Perpetua followed her. As soon as they had turned the corner, and were in a place whence nothing could be seen which was passing at Don Abbondio's door, Agnes coughed loudly. This was the signal, Renzo understood it, pressed the arm of Lucia to encourage her, and both of them on the tips of their toes, turned also their corner, creeping closely to the wall, reached the door, and opened it gently; first one, and then the other silently

stooping down, glided into the hall, where the two brothers were waiting for them. Renzo replaced, without making the slightest noise, the latch of the door, and all four went up the stairs, making not more noise than would be made by two. Being arrived upon the landing, the two brothers went to the door of the room which was on the side of the staircase, and the lovers kept close to the wall.

"Deo gratias," said Tonio, with a clear voice.

"Tonio, eh! enter," answered a voice from within.

Tonio opened the door just enough to let himself and his brother in, one at a time. The ray of light that burst at once through the opening, and fell upon the dark floor of the landing, made Lucia tremble as if she was discovered. The brothers having entered, Tonio closed the door behind him, the lovers remaining immoveable in the dark, their ears stretched out, and holding their breath: the loudest noise that was heard was the continual beating of the poor heart of Lucia.

Don Abbondio, as we have said, was seated in an old arm chair, by the faint light of a small lamp, wrapped up in a worn symar or gown, with the upper part of his head buried in an old cap, in which his face was set as in a frame. Two of his grizzly locks had escaped from his cap, and his thick eyebrows, mustachios, and a grey tuft on his chin, were hoarily stuck in his embrowned and wrinkled visage, and somewhat resembled those snowy looking tufts of bushes, which are seen growing on the side of a steep by the pale light of the moon.

"Ah, ah," was his salutation, whilst he took off his spectacles and placed them in the leaves of the book.

"Your worship will say I am come late," said Tonio, bowing, as did also Gervaso in a clumsy way.

"Certainly, it is late: late in every sense. Do you know that I am sick?"

"I am sorry to hear it."

"You must have heard that I am sick, and I don't know when I shall be able to go out. But why have you brought that—that—young fellow—with you?"

"Only for company, your worship."

"Well, well, let us see."

"Here are five and twenty new pieces, those with Saint Ambrose on horseback," said Tonio, taking a purse tied in a knot from his pocket.

"Let us see," replied Don Abbondio, and taking the purse, he put his spectacles on, untied it, took out the money, turned it, returned it, counted it, and found it all right."

"Now, your worship will please to give me the necklace of my Tecla."

"That is correct," replied Don Abbondio, and going to a closet took out a key, and looking round as if to see no lookers on were near him, opened another closet, filling the entrance of it with his person, putting his head in to look, and reaching with his arm to take out the pledge. Having got it, he locked the door, opened the paper, and saying, "It is all right," folded it up again, and delivered it to Tonio.

"Now," said Tonio, "have the goodness to put a little black upon the white."

"This, too," said Don Abbondio, "they understand every thing. Eh, how suspicious the world has got to be! Don't you trust me?"

"How your worship? Don't I trust you? You do me injustice. But as my name is in the book, on the debtor's side—as your worship has had the trouble to write once, so life and death are——"

"Very well, very well," interrupted Don Abbondio, and grumbling, he drew towards him a small case that was on the table, took some paper, pen and ink, and began to write, repeating over all the words, as they came from his pen. In the meantime, Tonio made a sign to Gervaso, and both of them placed themselves before the table, so as to hide the door from the curate whilst he was writing. And as if from pure idleness, they began to scrape and rub the floor with their feet, as a sign to the lovers to enter, and to conceal the noise of their feet when they should enter. Don Abbondio was so taken up with his writing that he paid no attention to any thing else. At the scraping of their feet, Renzo took the arm of Lucia, pressed it to give her courage, and moved, drawing her, all trembling, behind him, and incapable of moving alone.

Softly they entered the room, on the tips of their feet, keeping in their breath, and placed themselves behind the two brothers. In the meantime, Don Abbondio, having finished the receipt, read it over again attentively, without raising his eyes from the paper, and folding it up, said, "Will you be satisfied now?" And taking his spectacles from his nose with one hand, and reaching out the paper with the other, he lifted up his face. Tonio, extending his right hand to take it, drew on one side, and Gervaso at a sign from him drew to another, so that, like the scenes which sometimes occur on the theatre, Renzo and Lucia appeared in the centre.

Don Abbondio looked, and was astounded; he became aware of the trap he had fallen into, was enraged, but in a moment came to a resolution. All this took place whilst Renzo was saying, "Signor curate, this is my wife in the presence of these witnesses."

His lips were not yet closed, ere Don Abbondio let fall the receipt, laid hold of the lamp with his left hand, lifted it up, seized with his right the cloth that covered the table, and drew it off in a ferocious manner, throwing to the ground, book, paper, inkstand, sandbox and every thing else, and rushing from his chair and the table, got near to Lucia. The poor young creature, all trepidation, had scarce with her gentle voice, got out, "And this—"

when Don Abbondio most uncourteously flung the cloth over her head and face, to prevent her from pronouncing the whole formula: then letting the lamp fall from his left hand, he used that also to wrap the cloth so tightly over her face that he almost suffocated her; screaming out in the meantime, like a wounded bull, "Perpetua, Perpetua, treason, help!"

The dying lamp sent from the floor a faint and flickering glare upon Lucia, who altogether terrified, did not even attempt to disengage herself, and who might be thought to resemble a statue modelled from chalk, over which the sculptor had thrown a wet cloth. The light having expired, Don Abbondio left the poor girl, and groping about for a door that led to another room, found it and fastened himself in, screaming all the time, "Perpetua, treason, help; out of this house, out of this house." In the first room every thing was confusion. Renzo, groping about with his hands to get hold of the curate, as if he was playing at blindman's buff, reached the door, and thumped at it, calling out, "Open, open, don't make such a screaming." Lucia called Renzo with a faint voice, and said in a supplicating manner to him, "Let us go, let us go, for the love of God." Tonio, on the floor, all fours, was scraping about, hoping to lay his paws on the receipt, whilst Gervaso, terrified, was jumping about and screaming, seeking for the door that opened upon the landing in order to save himself.

In the midst of this confusion, we cannot forbear stopping an instant to make a reflection. Renzo, whom we find kicking up a prodigious noise, in the night time, in another man's house, into which he had introduced himself in an underhanded way, and who kept the master of the house besieged in a room, has all the appearance of an oppressor; yet at the end of the story he turns out to be the oppressed. Don Abbondio, surprised, put in flight, terrified, whilst he was occupied with his own affairs, would seem to be a persecuted man, yet in reality it was he who inflicted the injury. That is the way things often go in the world—I mean to say, it is the way they used to go in the seventeenth century.

The besieged, perceiving that the enemy gave no signs of decamping, opened a window that looked towards the sacristy or vestry room, and began to scream out, "assistance, help, help." The moon shone in the most beautiful manner, the shadow of the church, and at a greater distance the long and acute figure of the steeple, was extended, dark, immoveable and distinct, upon the grassy and shining lawn of the sacristy, every object could be discerned as clear as by daylight. But as far as the sight could extend, there was no indication of a living soul. Contiguous, however, to the side wall of the church, and exactly on that side which looked towards the parsonage, was a small habitation, a hole of a place where the sacristan slept. This man being awakened by this unusual alarm, started in his bed, got up, opened a sort of glazed paper window, put his head out, and with his eye-lids yet glued together, called out, "What's the matter?"

"Run, Ambrosio, help, people in the house," Don Abbondio, kept screaming towards him. "I'll come directly," replied he, drawing in his head and closing the window; and although half asleep, and more than half frightened, he hit upon an expedient, at once to give more help than he was asked for, without running his own head into Don Abbondio's troubles, of whatever nature they might be. Seizing his breeches which were upon the bed, and shoving them under his arm like a dress hat, he scrambled quickly down his wooden ladder, ran to the steeple, seized hold of the rope of the largest of two bells hung there, and began to pull away.

Tong, tong, tong, tong, in an instant all the country people were sitting upright in bed, and all the lads that were stretched out on the hay, hung out their ears and sprung out upon their feet. "What's the matter, what's the matter? The steeple bell? Fire? Thieves? Banditti?" Then some of the women began to pray their husbands not to stir, to let the others go; some get up, and go to the window; the poltroons, as if they had yielded to the entreaties of their wives, crept under the blankets again. The bold and the more curious ran for their pitchforks and harquebusses, to go to the parsonage, whilst others merely looked on.

But before these people had got together, indeed before they were well awake, the noise had reached the ears of others who were watching, not far off, on foot, and in their clothes. The Bravos in one place, Agnes and Perpetua in another. We will tell, first, what was done by those from the moment we left them, partly in the ruined house, and partly at the inn. The three, when they perceived all the cottages were closed, and the streets deserted, left the inn, as if they were going a considerable distance, making without any noise, a reconnoissance through the village, to ascertain if every body was retired; and in fact, they did not meet a living soul, or hear the slightest noise. They also passed, and still more softly, before our poor cottage, the most noiseless of them all, because there was nobody within. From thence they went straight to the ruin, to make their report to Griso. Immediately he placed on his head a large old hat, and upon his shoulders a pilgrim's cloak of waxed cloth, sprinkled over with cockle shells, took in his hand a pilgrim's staff, and saying, "Now let us go like brave fellows, silence, and attention to orders," he moved, and the rest followed him.

In a short time they reached the cottage, by a road opposite to that by which our nuptial party went on their expedition. Griso kept his troop a little in the rear, preceding them himself, with a view to explore, and finding the street deserted, and every thing still out of doors, he made two of his ruffians come forward, ordered them to get over the

wall quietly which enclosed the court yard, and when within, to conceal themselves in a corner behind a thick fig tree, which he had remarked in the morning. Having done this, he tapped gently at the door, intending to say that a pilgrim who had lost his way desired lodgings until morning. No one answering, he knocked a little louder, but all was still. He then called a third rogue, made him get into the court yard like the others, with directions to draw the nails from the chain that held the bolt within, that they might have free ingress and egress. Every thing was executed with great caution, and in the best way. Having gone to call the others, he made them enter with him, sent them to post themselves with the first, shut the door gently, placed two sentinels within, and goes straight to the door of the house. There, too, he knocked, waited —he might well wait! Having opened this door likewise, still no one within says, who's there? No one moves; what a famous chance! forwards, then. "St." having called the men behind the fig tree, he walked with them into the room on the ground floor, where in the morning he had iniquitously begged their morsel of bread from them. He now took out tinder, flint, steel and matches, and lit a small lamp he had brought, entered another room inside, to see if there was any one there, and found no one. He now went to the foot of the stairs, looked, listened; all was solitude and silence.

Leaving two other sentinels below, he told Grignapoco to come with him; a Bravo of the Bergamasc country, who was to do all the threatening, the coaxing, the commanding, in fact who was to do all the talking of the party, so that his dialect might induce Agnes to believe the expedition came from those parts. With this fellow at his side, and the others behind, Griso mounted the staircase, softly, softly, cursing in his heart every step that made a noise, every tread of the ruffians that broke the silence. At length he reached the top. Here the hare lies. Gently he pushed the door of the first room he met, it opens a little, he looks in, all is dark: he applies his ear to discover if any one snores, breathes, or moves; he hears nothing. In he goes; placing the lantern before his face, that he may see without being seen; he opens the door wide, perceives a bed: the bed is made and quite smooth, the linen neatly turned down, and resting on the bolster. Shrugging his shoulders, he turns to his troop, and makes a sign to them that he is going to examine the other room, and that they keep behind him without making a noise: he goes there, examines in the same way, and finds exactly the same state of things. "What the devil is all this?" said he, then openly, "has some rascally traitor been betraying us?" All now, with less caution, began to examine, to fumble in every corner, and ended by turning the house topsy turvy.

Whilst these matters were going on, the two, who were on guard at the gate of the court yard next the street, hear approaching, from a direction beyond the street, a light foot walking and drawing near; supposing that, whoever it was, they would pass straight on, they remained silent, and kept themselves diligently on the alert. The footstep ceased, as soon as it reached the gate. It was Menico, who came in haste, sent by father Christopher, to warn the two women for the love of Heaven to escape immediately from the cottage, and take refuge at the convent, because —we know the because. Taking hold of the handle of the bolt to knock, he found it loose in his hand, broken, and the nails drawn.— What can this be? thought he, and thrusts the door quite frightened; it opens, he puts a foot cautiously within, and immediately feels himself seized by both arms, and hears two low voices say to him, right and left, "be silent, hold your tongue, or you die." He on the contrary screaming out, one of the villains, gave him a great slap on the mouth, whilst the other put his hand to his knife to frighten him. The boy trembled like a leaf, and gave over screaming; but all at once, in his stead, and in a very different sort of tone, the first twang of the church bell broke out, followed up by that tempest of strokes that pealed upon the night after it. He who is in the wrong box always knows it, says a Milanese proverb; each of these scoundrels thought he heard the bell repeat his name, his Christian name, and his family name; they let go the arms of Menico, draw back their own in a rage, open their hands and mouths wide open, look in each other's faces, and run to the house, where the major part of the troop was. Menico cleared out, and took to his legs in the direction of the steeple, where he had good reasons for supposing he should meet with some body or other.

Upon the rest of the villains, who were roving about the house from top to bottom, the terrible sound of the church bell made the same impression: they confounded, they embarrassed, they rushed against each other, each one sought the shortest way to reach the door. And yet they were all proved men, and habituated to show their faces; still they could not hold up against an undefined danger, and of which they had not had the slightest glimpse before it had so suddenly come upon them. All the superiority of Griso was necessary to keep them together, and prevent a retreat being turned to a flight.

As a dog escorting a herd of swine, runs now here, now there, after those that are astray, bites one by the ear, and draws it back into the herd, seizes another by the snout, and barks at a third, that at the same moment is leaving the ranks, so the pilgrim seizes one of them by the tuft, just as he was reaching the door, and drags him back; drives back with his staff first one and then another, that were near him, cries out to the rest that are running they know not where, so that at last he assembled them all in the centre of the

court yard. "Halt! halt! pistols in hand, knives ready, all together, and then we go, that's the way. Who do you think will touch us, if we all keep together, you wicked devils, you? But if we let ourselves be caught one by one, why even these country bumpkins will give it to us. For shame! keep behind me, and keep close." After this short harangue, he placed himself in front, and went out first. The cottage, as we have stated, was at the end of the village, Griso took the road that led away from it, and all kept behind in good order.

Let us let them go, whilst we turn back a step or two to take up Agnes and Perpetua, whom we have placed there behind a certain corner. Agnes had contrived to get her friend as far away from Don Abbondio's as it was possible, and up to a certain point the matter went on pretty well; but all at once, Perpetua recollected that the door was left open, and wanted to go back. There was no remedy; and Agnes, that she might create no suspicion, had been obliged to turn about also, and go behind her, endeavoring, nevertheless, to engage her attention, every time her imagination appeared warmed up with the story of the matrimonies of by-gone days. She pretended to give her the greatest attention, and from time to time to show her how much interest she felt in the affair, and to encourage this gossiping, said, "Certainly, now I understand, that is quite right, nothing can be clearer, and then? and he? and you?" During this she held another colloquy with herself.—Have they got off by this time? or are they yet in the house? What boobies we were all three, not to have concerted some signal for me when the affair had succeeded! What a stupid mistake! But it is over; now it will be better to keep amusing her as well as I can, at the worst it will be a little time lost. Thus, sometimes stopping, sometimes going on, they at last got back not far from Don Abbondio's house, which, however, was not to be seen on account of the corner; and Perpetua, finding herself in a very important part of her narration, permitted herself to be detained without resistance, indeed, without being aware of it; when, suddenly, was heard echoing from above, in the immoveable void of the air, through the vast silence of night, that first enraged scream of Don Abbondio, "help! help!"

"Mercy! what has happened?" cried out Perpetua, and wanted to run.

"What is it, what is it?" said Agnes, pulling her back by her gown.

"Misery! hav'nt you heard?" answered she, getting away from her.

"What is it, what is it," repeated Agnes, grasping her by the arm.

"Devil of a woman!" exclaimed Perpetua, flinging her off to get at liberty, and to be able to run. Just then, further off, in a finer key, and more instantaneous, the screaming of Menico was heard.

"Mercy!" cried Agnes also now, and went full gallop after Perpetua. Scarce had they lifted their heels, when the church bell began, one, two, three, and kept pealing away: if they had wanted any spurs, these would have been sufficient. Perpetua arrived first by two paces; whilst she was reaching out her hand to the door to throw it open, it suddenly opened from within, and behold upon the threshold, Tonio, Gervaso, Renzo and Lucia, who, having found the stairs, had got down them by jumps, and hearing those strokes on the bell, were running off in a fright to put themselves in safety.

"What is it? what is it?" asked Perpetua, out of breath, of the brothers—who answered her by running against her, and pushing off "And you! how! what are you doing here?" she asked of the other couple as soon as she knew them; but they, too, went on without answering her. Perpetua, hastening where she was most wanted, asked no further; she pushed eagerly into the house, and groped her way to the staircase.

The two lovers, who remained yet betrothed, found Agnes before them in an agony of vexation. "Ah, here you are!" said she, bringing the words out with an effort. "How did the affair go? what is that bell about? I think I heard——"

"Let us go home, let us go home," said Renzo, "before the people come." And on they went, when, lo! Menico, on the full run, comes up, recognizes them, stands before them, and yet trembling, with a voice half spent, cries out, "Where are you going? back, back—this way, to the convent."

"What is it thou that——" began Agnes.

"What's the matter?" asked Renzo; Lucia, terrified, stood trembling and silent.

"Why, the devil's got into your house," answered Menico, out of breath; "I have seen him myself—they wanted to kill me—father Christopher said so—and you, too, Renzo, he said you must come directly. I saw them myself—it's a providence that I find you all here. I'll tell you when we get out of town."

Renzo, who had his wits about him more than any of them, thought either this way or that they must go immediately, before the people came up, and that the best way was to do what Menico advised; nay, commanded them to do, with the voice of one frightened out of his senses. On the road, then, and out of the confusion and danger, they could ask the little boy for a clearer explanation. "Walk before," said he; "let us go with him," said he to the women. They turned, rapidly drew near to the church, passed the sacristy, where by the favor of Heaven there was not a living soul, entered a narrow street that separated the church and the house of Don Abbondio, and getting into the first lane they met with, took to the fields.

They had perhaps not got fifty paces, when the people began to draw nigh to the sacristy, and were increasing in number. They looked

in each other's faces, every one had something to ask about, no one an answer to give. The first who arrived ran to the church door—it was shut. They ran to the belfrey, and one of them clapping his mouth to a sort of loophole there was in the wall, bawled out, "What the devil is the matter?" Ambrosio, as soon as he heard a voice he knew, let go the rope, and hearing from the rumor that there was a concourse of people without, answered, "I'll come and open the door." In haste he slipped on the garment he had carried away under his arm, came through to the church door and opened it.

"What is all this uproar about? What's the matter? Where—who is it?"

"How, who is it?" said Ambrosio holding the door with one hand, and with the other hitching up the article of dress he had put on in such a hurry, "What don't you know? There's some people in the curate's house, help, help." All run to the house, examine it, crowd near to it, look above, listen, every thing was quiet. Others go to the street door, find it shut and fastened, they look up, and don't find a window open, not the least movement is heard within.

"Who is within? Hollo, hollo! Signor curate! signor curate!" Don Abbondio, who, as soon as he was aware of the flight of the invaders, had closed the window and retired from it, and who at that moment was wrangling in an under tone with Perpetua, who had left him all alone in his state of trouble, was obliged, when he heard himself called by the people, to go again to the window, and beholding such powerful succor repented the having invoked it.

"What has happened? What have they done to you? Who are they? Where are they?" fifty voices cried out to him all at once.

"Here's nobody here now. I thank you, return home again, therefore."

"But who has been here? Where are they gone? What has happened?"

"Bad people, people that go about by night, but they are fled; go home again, it is nothing at all—another time my children—I thank you for your kind heartedness." Having said this he shut the window and retired. Now some began to grumble, others to joke, and some to curse; some again shrugged up their shoulders and went away, when a man arrived breathless, and endeavored to force out a few words. This man lived opposite almost to our women, and having, during the rumor, gone to the window, perceived in the court yard of their cottage, the disordered troop of Bravos, when Griso was worrying himself to bring them to order. As soon as he had recovered his voice, he exclaimed,

"What are you doing here, my sons? The devil is not here, he is at the other end of the village, at the cottage of Agnes Mondella; armed men have got into it, and it seems they are going to murder a pilgrim—who knows what the devil they are going to do!"

"What? what? what?" And then began a tumultuous consultation.

"We must go there! We must go and see? How many of them are they? How many are we? Who are they? The consul!* The consul!"

"Here I am," answered the consul from the midst of the crowd, "Here I am, but you must give me assistance, and you must obey. Quick, where is the sacristan? Ring the bell, ring the bell. Let one of you immediately go to Lecco to seek assistance; come here all of you——"

Now some dart off through the crowd to the belfry, and pull away; great was the tumult, when another man arrives who had seen the enemy in full retreat, and screamed out in his turn, "Run, my sons, thieves or banditti are carrying off a pilgrim—they have already left the village—after them—after them!" Upon this information, without awaiting the orders of their leader, off they start in a mass, all mixed together, through the village. As the army proceeded, some of the vanguard slackened their pace, suffered themselves to be overtaken, and so fell into the centre of the body. Those in the rear pushed on before, and thus the confused swarm reached the indicated cottage.

Traces of the invasion were recent and manifest; the gate open, the bolt wrenched off, but the invaders gone. They entered the court yard, and approach the house door, that too is open and the fastening broken; they call out, "Agnes, Lucia! The pilgrim! Where is the pilgrim? Stephano must have been dreaming about a pilgrim—no, no, Carl Andrea saw him too. Hollo, pilgrim! Agnes! Lucia!" no one answers. "They have carried them off! They have carried them off!" Some now raising their voices, proposed to follow the ravishers, it was a nefarious act, and would be the reproach of the whole country if every villain was to be suffered with impunity to carry off women, just as a kite does chickens from a deserted habitation. A new and a more tumultuous consultation now began, but one (and it never was known exactly who it was) spread a report that Agnes and Lucia had taken refuge in one of the houses. This soon got into circulation, and was believed; a pursuit of the fugitives was no longer spoken of, and the multitude broke up, each one going to his own home. Then came whisperings, noises, knocking and opening of doors, the appearance and disappearance of lamps, questions asked by women from the windows, and answers given from the street.

This having become once more deserted and silent, the conversations were revived in the houses, until they expired amidst a general gaping, to be resuscitated again the next day. No new facts, however, occurred, except that on the succeeding morning, the consul standing in his field, with his chin resting upon his hands,

* A village magistrate.

his hands upon the end of the handle of his spade, half buried in the ground, with his foot yet upon it, and musing within himself upon the mysteries of the past night, and of what might be expected of him, and of what it was his duty to do, saw two men approaching of a very lively presence, their hair combed out like two kings of France of the first race, and, in every thing else extremely resembling the two men, who five days before had stopped Don Abbondio, if they were not the very same persons. With still less ceremony they intimated to the consul, that he had better be careful how he made any depositions before the podesta of what had happened, of telling what had taken place, even if he should be interrogated; of gossiping about it, or encouraging any gossipings amongst the country people, if he entertained the slightest hope of regularly dying in a fit of sickness.

Our wanderers went on for some time at a good pace, in silence, first one and then another turning about to look if any body was following them, troubled what with the fatigue they endured, the struggle and suspense they had gone through, the vexation of their ill success, and the confused apprehension of this new inconceivable danger. Their distress too was increased by the tolling of the bell, as if in continual pursuit of them, and which, although, as the distance increased, it became weaker and more obtuse, seemed to assume a more lugubrious and ill-omened tone. At length it ceased. Finding themselves in an unfrequented plain, and perfectly alone, they slackened their pace, and Agnes was the first who, having recovered her breath, broke silence, asking Renzo how the affair had gone, and desiring Menico to tell her what devil he had seen at the cottage. Renzo briefly related his sorrowful story, and all three turned to the boy, who detailed to them more exactly the advice of the father, and narrated what he himself had seen, and the risk he had run, and which was too well confirmed by the friar's message. The listeners comprehended more than Menico knew how to tell them; at this discovery they were again seized with a shivering; all three stood for a moment in the middle of the road, and exchanged with each other a look of terror, and with an unanimous movement, all placed their hands on the boy, one on his head, another on his shoulders, as if to caress him, and tacitly thank him for having been a tutelar angel to them, to show him how they sympathized with him, and almost to ask him to forgive them for the anguish he had suffered on their account, and the danger he had incurred to save them.

"Now, go home, that thy friends may not be distressed any longer on thy account," said Agnes to him; and remembering the two parpagliole she had promised him, she produced four and gave them to him, adding, "enough, pray to God that we may meet soon, and then——" Renzo gave him a new livre, and entreated him not to say any thing about the commission he had received from the friar. Lucia caressed him again, bid him good bye with a trembling voice, and the boy quite softened, saluted them and turned back. Onwards they went, quite thoughtful, the women before and Renzo in the rear, as if to guard them. Lucia held closely to the arm of her mother, and gently and dextrously declined his proffered assistance in the awkward places they came to, in a journey so out of the common road. She was ashamed, even in her distress, at having been so often alone with him, and so familiarly, when she expected in but a few moments to be his wife; now that vision having so sorrowfully passed away, she repented even this; and amongst so many causes of trepidation, she even trembled for that modesty which is not the result of the sad acquaintance with evil, but that delicate modesty which does not even know itself: like the fear of the child who trembles in darkness without knowing why.

"And the cottage?" said Agnes, on a sudden. But although the care which produced that exclamation from her was an important one, no one replied, because no one could give her a satisfactory answer. They therefore continued their walk in silence, and soon after finally came out in a small square before the church of the convent.

Renzo went to the door of the church and pushed it very hard. The door immediately opened, and the moonlight entering through the space, illuminated the pallid countenance and the silver beard of father Christopher, who was standing there waiting. As soon as he saw that no one was wanting, "God be blessed," said he, and made them a sign to enter. By his side was another capuchin, the lay sacristan, whom with entreaties and arguments he had pursuaded to watch with him, to leave the door ajar, and to remain there unguarded to receive those poor menaced people: and nothing less than the authority of the father, and his reputation as a saint, would have sufficed to determine the lay brother to a condescension, both inconvenient, dangerous, and irregular. As soon as they were within, father Christopher gently shut the door. Then the sacristan could no longer contain himself, and taking the father aside, he whispered in his ear, "but, father, father! at night—in the church—with women shut up—the rules—but father!" and he shook his head. Whilst he was articulating with effort these words—now just see! thought father Christopher, if it was some ruffian pursued, friar Fazio would not oppose the least difficulty, and a poor innocent that is escaping from the claws of the wolf—"*omnia munda mundis*," he then said, suddenly turning to brother Fazio, and forgetting that he did not understand latin. But this forgetfulness was exactly what produced the effect. If the father had entered upon a course of argument, brother Fazio would not have been wanting

in reasons to answer him, and Heaven knows when the dispute would have been terminated. But hearing these grave words, bearing so mysterious a sense, and uttered so resolutely, it appeared to him that they must contain the solution of all his doubts. He was satisfied, and said "Very well, you know better than me, father."

"Confide in me," answered father Christopher; and by the faint light of the lamp which was burning before the altar, he drew near to the refugees, who were standing there waiting, and said to them, "My children! thank the Lord that he has delivered you from so great a danger. Perhaps at this moment——!" And here he began to relate to them the cause why he had despatched the little messenger, never suspecting that they knew more about it than he did himself, and supposing that Menico had found them quiet at home, before the Bravos had arrived. No one undeceived him, not even Lucia, although she had some secret remorse for dissimulating with a man of his character; but this was a night full of entanglement and duplicity. "After this," continued he, "you see my children, that this part of the country is not safe for you. It is yours, you are born here, you have done wrong to no one, but God wills it so. It is a trial, my children; bear it with patience, with constancy, without rancor, and rest assured that the time will come when you will say that you are contented with what has happened. I have thought of a refuge for you in these first moments. Soon, I hope, you will be able to return in safety to your own homes; in every way God will provide for you for the best, and most certainly I will endeavor not to be found wanting for the favor I have found with him, choosing me, as he has done, as his minister, in the service of you his afflicted ones. You," continued he, addressing himself to the women, "can stop at———." There you will be sufficiently out of danger, and at the same time, not too distant from your home. Inquire for our convent: ask for the father guardian, give him this letter, he will be to you another father Christopher. And thee, my poor Renzo, thou also must save thyself from the fury of another, as well as from thy own. Carry this letter to father Buonaventura du Lodi at our convent, at the eastern gate in Milan. He will be a father to thee, will give thee directions, will find thee work, until the moment when thou canst return here to live tranquilly. Go to the bank of the lake, near the mouth of the Bione," a mountain stream not far from the convent, "there thou'lt find a boat; call out—boat—thou wilt be asked for whom; answer Saint-Francis. The boat will then take thee, transport thee to the other bank, where thou wilt find a wagon that will conduct thee straight on as far as———"

Whoever asks how father Christopher could so soon have at his disposition those means of transportation by water and by land, shows that he knows nothing of the influence a capuchin could acquire, who was reputed to be a saint.

The next thing to think of was the custody of the cottages. The father received the keys, taking upon himself the charge of delivering them to those whom Renzo and Agnes indicated to him. Agnes, when she gave up her own, brought out a great sigh, thinking, that at that very moment, the cottage was open, that the devil had been inside of it, and that there was no guessing what might be left in it to take care of.

"Before you go," said the father, "let us all put up supplications to the Lord, that he may be with you in your journey, and always, and above all, that he may fill you with strength, and with grace, to wish that his will may be done." Saying this, he knelt down in the middle of the church, and all did the same. As soon as they had prayed a few moments in silence, he, with a low, but distinct voice, articulated these words: "We pray thee, also, for that wretched being who has brought us to this pass. We should be unworthy of thy mercy, if we did not ask it for him from our hearts, for he has great need of it. For us, in our tribulation, we have this comfort, Lord—that we tread the path in which thou hast placed us. Our woes we can offer up to thee, and turn them into gain. But he! he is thy enemy. Unhappy man! he strives against his God! Have mercy upon him, Oh Lord! touch his heart, make him love thee, and grant to him all that happiness we would ask for ourselves."

Then quickly rising up, he said, "Away, my children; there is no time to lose. God protect you; may his angel accompany you! go!" As they departed, filled with emotions that cannot express themselves by words, and that manifest themselves without them, the father added, in a low tone, full of feeling, "My heart tells me we shall soon see each other again."

Certainly, the heart, when one attends to it, has always something to say about the future. But what does the heart know? Scarce the least thing of the past.

Without awaiting an answer, brother Christopher withdrew with a hurried step; the travelers left the church, and brother Fazio closed the door, saying adieu to them in a tone likewise of some feeling. Slowly they took the road to the bank that had been named to them, saw the boat there, and having interchanged the countersign, entered it. The boatman thrust his oar against the bank, and shoved the boat off; then, taking the other, used both his arms to row them to the opposite shore. Not a breath of wind was stirring. The lake was reposing quietly and smoothly, and would have appeared immovable, but for the tremulous and slight waving motion of the light of a fine moon, that was admiring herself in the lake from the midst of the heavens. No sounds were heard save the dead and gentle flow of

the water, breaking in ripples on the gravelly shore; its more distant murmuring, as it broke amidst the piles of the bridge, and the measured dashing of the two oars, which cutting the azure surface of the lake reappeared together, dropping with the fluid, again to be simultaneously buried beneath. The wave occasioned by the advancing boat reunited itself behind the stern, and formed a crested line, which prolonged itself as they receded from the shore. The passengers, mute, with their faces turned back, looked at the mountains and the country bathed in moonlight, and chequered here and there by strong shades. Villages, houses, cabins, were seen. The ample palace of Don Rodrigo, with its flat tower, elevated above the miserable and crowded cottages on the skirt of the promontory, seemed like some ferocious being standing in the darkness over a company recumbent and asleep, watching and meditating a crime. Lucia saw it and shuddered; she followed the slope of the country down with her eye as far as her own village; caught the extreme end of it; perceived her cottage, the thick foilage of the fig tree which almost shadowed the circuit of the court-yard, even the window of her own room; and thus seated in the bottom of the boat, leaning her elbow on the gunnel, she lowered her face as if to slumber, and wept in secret.

Adieu, ye mountains, rearing yourselves from the waters erect unto heaven! Unequal summits, known to him who has been brought up amidst you, and impressed on his mind as vividly as the features of a familiar friend. Ye torrents, whose brawling sounds come upon his ear like well known domestic voices: ye scattered villages, blanching the steeps, like flocks of browsing sheep, adieu! How sorrowful is the tread of him, who, reared among you, must leave you behind. Even in the fancy of him who voluntarily goes, led on by the hopes of future prosperity, at that moment all the dreams of riches lose their influence; he wonders how he could have resolved, and would retrace his steps, were it not for the thought that another day shall see him return in opulence. The further he advances upon the plain, the more his eye becomes wearied and annoyed by the unvarying space: the air seems heavy and without elasticity; sad and inattentive he enters the tumultuous city; houses joined to houses—streets terminating in streets, appear to impede his respiration; and standing before those edifices which are the admiration of the stranger, he recalls to his mind, with restless partiality, the little field of his native place, and that cottage he has had in his eye so long, the future acquisition when he returns enriched to his native mountains.

But she who had never cast beyond her native mountains even a fugitive desire, who had formed all her plans for the future amongst them, and who is driven far away by a perverse fortune! torn away at once from the most endearing habits, disturbed in her sweetest hopes, leaving her own hills to tread those paths of the stranger, which she has never desired to know, and who cannot even in imagination fix upon a moment appointed for her return! Adieu, native cottage, where, seated, amidst her secret thoughts, she learnt to distinguish from the common tread, the footsteps of the one she awaited with a mysterious apprehension. Adieu, that yet unfrequented roof, where, passing, she had so often cast a fugitive look, and not without a blush: where her mind indulged in soft anticipations of a life spent in the tranquil and steady duties of a wife. Adieu, church, to which her serene soul had so often returned, to sing the praises of the Lord, where a holy rite had been promised and prepared; where the secret wish of the heart was to have been solemnly blessed, where she was to have been commanded to love, and where her love was to have been pronounced holy. Farewell! Yet know that he who placed you in this sweet existence, is every where; and that he never disturbs the contentment of his children, but to prepare a happiness for them that is purer, and less uncertain.

Such was the nature, if not exactly thus, of the thoughts of Lucia, and not very dissimilar the reflections of the two other pilgrims, whilst the boat was drawing nigh to the right bank of the Adda.

CHAPTER IX.

The shock of the boat against the bank shook Lucia, who after secretly wiping away her tears, rose up as if from sleeping. Renzo got out first, gave his hand to Agnes, who jumping ashore, he then assisted Lucia, and all three of them returned, in a dejected manner, their thanks to the boatman. "Not at all, not at all, we are here in this world to help one another," he answered, and withdrew his hand in a sort of fright as if it had been proposed to him to rob, when Renzo wanted to put in it some of the money he had about him, and which he had put in his pocket that evening, with the intention of generously gratifying Don Abbondio, as soon as he had rendered him a service, in despite of himself. The wagon was there ready, the guide saluted the three expected passengers, they entered it, he spoke to his horse, gave him a crack, and off they went.

Our author does not describe that nocturnal journey, suppresses the name of the village where father Christopher had sent the two women, and even expressly protests against disclosing it. In the progress of the story however we find the reason for this concealment. The adventures of Lucia in that residence are wrapped up in a dark intrigue of a person connected with a family, as it appears, rather powerful at the time the author wrote

To give an account of the strange conduct of that person in this particular case, he has been obliged to relate in a succinct manner, her previous life, and the family cuts that figure, which any one may see who chooses to read. But that which the circumspection of our author has induced him to keep back, our diligence has enabled us to supply from another quarter. A Milanese historian* who had to speak of the same person, does not name her, it is true, nor her residence: but of this last, he says, that it was an ancient and noble burgh, to which no attribute of a city was wanting but the name of one; in one place he says the Lambro flows through it, in another that there is an arch priest. From the meeting of these two extremes we draw the conclusion that it was beyond all doubt Monza. In the vast treasure of learned deductions more refined ones may possibly be found, but it may be doubted whether they are more certain. Well founded conjectures too may be founded upon the name of the family, but although the conjecture on our part has ceased to be such for a long time, we think it better to suppress it, rather than run the risk of doing wrong even to the dead, and also to leave to the curious something to seek after.

Our travelers reached Monza a short time after sunrise; when the guide turned into an inn, and there, like a person acquainted both with the place and the innkeeper, had a room assigned to them, and accompanied them to it. With his thanks, Renzo wished him to receive a reward, but he, like the boatman, looked for one further off and richer; he also drew back his hand, and escaping from their kindness, went to look after his horse.

After such an evening as we have described, and such a night as every one may imagine, accompanied by such thoughts, in constant expectation of some disagreeable encounter, with more than autumnal sharpness in the air, and with sufficient jolting from the old vehicle, they thought they would sit down upon a bench fastened to the ground, in a room furnished as well as circumstances admitted of. Making a frugal meal together, consistent with the penury of the times, each of the three thought of the feast that two days before they expected to partake of, and they could not but sigh. Renzo would willingly have remained there the whole day, to have seen the women in safety, and to have rendered them the first services; but the father had recommended to them to send him immediately on his way. These directions, and a hundred other reasons, they repeated to him; that people would be censorious, that a prolonged separation would be more painful, that he could return soon to give and to receive news, and they said so much that the youth determined to depart. They concerted minutely what was to be done. Lucia did not conceal her tears, Renzo restrained his with difficulty, and pressing fervently the hand of Agnes, said with a half stifled voice, "may our next meeting be happy," and departed.

The women would have been greatly embarrassed, but for their kind guide, who had orders to conduct them to the convent, and to aid them with such directions and advice, as they might need. With him for an escort they took their way to it, which, as every one knows, was distant a short walk from Monza. Arrived at the gate, the guide rang the bell, and asked for the father guardian, who appeared and took the letter.

"Oh! brother Christopher!" said he, recognising the writing. The tone of his voice and the movement of his features manifestly indicated that he was pronouncing the name of an esteemed friend. Our good Christopher, we must say, in that letter, had recommended the women with much zeal, and described their case with much feeling, so that the guardian every now and then showed emotions of surprise and indignation, and raising his eyes from the paper, he fixed them upon the females with an expression of compassion and interest. Having read it through, he remained somewhat thoughtful, and then said to himself, "There is no one but the Signora; if the Signora would only take this charge on herself—" Drawing Agnes apart on the little square before the convent, he made some inquiries of her, which she satisfied, and turning towards Lucia, said to them both, "My good women, I will try, and I hope to be able to find you an asylum, more than safe, more than honored, until God shall provide for you in a better way. Will you come with me?"

The women reverently assented, and the friar continued, "Come with me to the monastery of the Signora. Keep however a little distant from me, for people take a pleasure in saying idle things, and god knows how many they would get up, if they saw the father guardian walking with a handsome young—— with females I should say."

Saying this, on he went. Lucia blushed; the guide, looking at Agnes, smiled, from whom also a momentary giggle escaped, and as soon as the friar had got a short distance from them, all three followed his steps. The women now asked of the guide, what they had not ventured to do of the father guardian, who this lady was.

"The Signora," he replied, "is a nun, but not a nun like the rest of them. Not that she is an Abbess, or the prioress either, being, as they say, one of the youngest of them: but she comes from the rib of Adam, and from great people in olden times, that came from Spain, where the nation is that commands here. Wherefore they call her the Signora, by way of saying that she is a very great one; and all the country calls her by that name, for they say that in that monastery there has never been any person like her; and her friends, down at Milan there, are great

*Josephi Repamontii, historia Patriæ, decadis v. lib. 6. cap 3. page 358.

people too, of that sort that's never in the wrong; and in Monza still more, for her father, although he does not live there, is the greatest man of the whole country, for which reason she can play top and bottom in the monastery, whenever she pleases. She is very much respected too by those out of it, and when she undertakes any thing, she is sure to make it succeed: and if that good devout man has leave to place you in her hands, and she receives you, I can tell you you will be as safe as if you was upon the altar.

Arrived at the gate of the town, flanked at that time by an old ruined tower, and by part of an old dilapidated castle, that perhaps ten of my readers may remember to have seen standing, the father guardian stopped, and turned to see if he was followed. He then passed it, and went on to the monastery, which, when he had reached, he stopped on the threshold waiting for the small party. He requested the guide to call at his convent for an answer to father Christopher, who, promising he would do so, took leave of the women, and was charged by them with many thanks and some commissions for father Christopher. The guardian now introduced the mother and daughter into the first court yard of the monastery, took them to the apartment of the nun who acted as fattora or steward, to whom he recommended them, and went alone to solicit protection for them. After a few moments he returned, quite cheerful, to tell them to accompany him to the Signora and he arrived in good season, for both mother and daughter had great difficulty in eluding the urgent and prying questions of the steward. Crossing a second court, he gave the women a few hints how to conduct themselves with the Signora." She is very well disposed towards you, and can do you a great deal of good. Be humble and respectful, answer with sincerity the questions she will be pleased to put to you, and when you are not interrogated, leave every thing to me."

They entered a room on the ground floor, from which they passed to the parlor. Before they entered it, the guardian, pointing to the door, said in a low voice to them, "she is here," as if to remind them of all the advice he had given them. Lucia, who had never seen a monastery, having entered the parlor, looked round for the Signora, that she might courtesy to her, and not perceiving any one became confused; but seeing the father advance towards the corner with Agnes behind him, looked there and perceived a break in the wall almost square, resembling a half window, closed up by two thick and well secured iron grates, distant about a span from each other, and a nun standing behind them. Her aspect, which showed her to be about twenty-five years of age, produced, at the first look, an impression of beauty, but beauty that had lost its bloom, and was both faded and discomposed. A black veil hanging down, and bound horizontally round her head, fell to the right and left, a little removed from her face; beneath the veil a very white linen band covered the half of a brow of a different, but not inferior purity: another band in plaits surrounded the face, and terminated under the chin in a neck-kerchief, which extended itself far enough down the breast to overlap the hem of a black serge. But that brow every now and then was gathered up into wrinkles, by a kind of sorrowful contraction, and then two very black eye-brows approached each other with a rapid movement. Two of the darkest eyes also would sometimes read the face of another, with a sort of superb investigation, and sometimes would hastily be cast to the ground as if to hide themselves. At certain moments an attentive observer would have said that they asked for affection, for mutual correspondence, for compassion; at others they would seem to express the instantaneous revelation of a restrained but inveterate hatred, of I know not what sort of ferocious detestation. When they were immovable and fixed without attention, some might suppose they could read in them a proud disgust, others would suspect the workings of some hidden thought, the too habitual indulgence of a care familiar to the mind, and occupying it more than surrounding objects did. Her pale, pale cheeks had a most delicate contour, but excessively attenuated, and changed by a slow decay. Her lips, though scarcely tinged with the palest rose, still were conspicuous by that paleness; their motion, like that of her eyes, was sudden, lively, full of expression and mystery. The well-proportioned height of her figure was obscured by the habitual stooping of her carriage, or reappeared in a wasted thinness, at certain sudden movements she was subject to, irregular, and too determined for a female, much more for a nun. Even in her garb there was something here and there that was studied or was neglected, which announced a nun of singular habits. Her mode of life was uniform, with certain habits of secular industry, and from the bands on her temples there peeped out a little curl of black hair, which either showed a forgetfulness or a contempt of the rule, which prescribed that those locks, which had been shorn at the solemn ceremony of profession, should always be kept cut.

These things did not occupy the minds of the two women, who were not accustomed to distinguish one nun from another; and the father guardian, who did not see her now for the first time, was already accustomed, like many others, to the eccentricity which appeared in her dress and manners.

She was standing, at that moment, as we have said, near the grate, leaning upon it languidly, passing her white finger through the holes of the grate, and curving her face a little, as if to observe those who were advancing to it. "Reverend mother, and most illustrious lady," said the guardian, stooping his face, and with his right hand extended on his breast, "this is

the poor young damsel, in whose favor you have made me hope for your powerful protection, and this is her mother."

Both of them courtesied very low, till the Signora made a motion to them to cease, and said, turning to the father, "I am fortunate in being able to do what is agreeable to our good friends, the capuchin fathers. But," she continued, "relate to me, a little more in detail, the case of this young maiden, that I may understand what it is best to do for her."

Lucia blushed, and hid her face in her bosom.

"You must know, reverend mother," Agnes began, but the guardian, with a look, took the words out of her mouth, and answered, "This young maiden, most illustrious lady, comes recommended to me, as I have said, by one of our brotherhood. She has been forced to leave her home secretly, to avoid great dangers, and is in want, for some time, of an asylum, in which she can remain unknown, and where none may dare to come to disturb her, even when——"

"What dangers?" interrupted the lady; "Do me the favor, father guardian, not to relate the case to me so enigmatically. You know that we nuns love stories to be told to us quite minutely."

"They are dangers," answered the guardian, "that to your pure ears, reverend mother, must be alluded to very slightly."

"Oh, certainly," she said, in a quick manner, and blushed a little. Was it modesty? Any one who had observed the rapid expression of vexation which accompanied the blush, might have doubted it; and still more, if they had compared it to that which now and then diffused itself over the cheeks of Lucia.

"It is enough to say," resumed the guardian, "that a powerful cavalier—it is not all the great personages of the world who use the gifts of God to his glory, and to the benefit of his neighbor, as you do, illustrious lady—a powerful cavalier, after having persecuted this young creature for a long time with unworthy propositions, seeing that they were useless, had the heart to persecute her openly by force, so that the poor girl has been reduced to the necessity of flying from her own home."

"Draw near young woman," said the Signora to Lucia, beckoning her with her finger, "I know that the father guardian is the very mouth of truth, but no one can be better informed than yourself of this affair. It is from you I must learn whether this cavalier was an unwelcome persecutor."

As far as drawing near went, Lucia obeyed her, but to answer her was an undertaking of a different kind. An inquiry into that matter, even if it had come from one of her equals, would have thrown her into confusion; but being made by the Signora with a certain arch touch of incredulity, she was deprived of all courage to answer. "Lady—mother—reverend"—she stammered out, and seemed not to be able to say any thing else. Here Agnes, as one who, next to her daughter, was certainly the best informed on the matter, thought herself authorised to come to her succor,"

"Illustrious lady," said she," "I can be a good witness, that this daughter of mine, hated that cavalier, as much as the devil hates holy water. I mean to say, that he was the devil himself: but the lady will pardon me if I talk foolishly, for we are people, just as it pleases God to have us. The fact is, that this young girl was betrothed to a young man, her equal, one who fears God, and well to do, and if the signor curate had been a little more of a man, as I will say—I know I am talking of a religious man; but father Christopher, a friend of the father guardian here, and a devout man like him, and a man full of charity, too—if he was here, he would bear witness—"

"You are very ready at talking, without being asked," interrupted the lady, with a haughty gesture, and an angry countenance, which almost deformed her. "Be silent; I know already that parents have always an answer prepared in the name of their children."

Agnes, mortified, gave Lucia a look that said,—you see what I have got because you can't talk. The guardian, with his eye and the motion of his head, made signs to Lucia that she must rouse herself, and not keep the Signora in suspense. "Reverend lady," said Lucia, "what my mother has told you is the simple truth. The youth who addressed me" —and here she became quite purple,—"I accepted willingly. Pardon me if I talk boldly, but I do it that you may not think ill of my mother. And, as for the cavalier, (God forgive him,) I would rather die than fall into his hands. And, if, by your charity, we are placed in safety, since we are reduced to be so bold as to ask an asylum, and to incommode persons of worth,—but the will of God be done,—be certain, lady, that none can pray for you with a truer heart than we poor women."

"I believe you," said the Signora, with a softened voice. "But, I' shall take pleasure in hearing you when we are alone. Not that any other proofs, or other inducements are wanting to me, to aid the zeal of the father guardian," she added, turning towards him with a studied politeness. "Indeed," she continued, "I have already thought, and this is what it occurs to me is the best that can be be done at present. The fattora of the monastery has placed, a few days ago, her last daughter out. These females can occupy the room she has left, and supply her place in the few services she rendered in the monastery. Truly"—and here beckoning to the guardian to draw nigh to the grate, she continued in a low voice,—"truly, in consequence of the general scarcity, there was no intention of substituting any body for that young person; but I will speak to the mother abbess, and a word from me——the desire, too, of the father guardian——In fine, the thing shall be done."

The guardian began to give thanks, but the Signora interrupted him. "No ceremonies, if you please; even I, in an emergency, an urgent necessity, should count upon the assistance of the capuchin fathers. For, indeed," she went on with a smile, in which there was something both jocular and bitter, "for, indeed, are not we brothers and sisters?"

Having said this, she called a lay sister, (two of these by a singular distinction were assigned to her private service,) and directed her to inform the abbess, and afterwards to bring the fattora to the door of the cloister, in order to make the necessary arrangements with her and Agnes. Having dismissed her, she took leave of the father guardian, and detained Lucia. The guardian accompanied Agnes to the door, giving her new instructions on the way, and then went to prepare the account he had to send to Father Christopher. She has got a great head, this lady, thought he on the way—most curious person to be sure! But whoever knows how to take her in the right humor, can do whatever he pleases with her. My good friend Christopher will be far from thinking, certainly, that I have served him so quickly and so well. What an excellent man! It can't be helped; he is always cutting out some work or another for himself; but always for the sake of doing good. It is well for him that he has found a friend this time, who, without any noise, any bustle, and without so many contrivances has conducted the affair into a good port in the twinkling of an eye. That good man Christopher, how contented he will be; he will see, too, that even we are good for something.

The Signora, who in the presence of an old capuchin had studied her gestures and her words, being now alone with an inexperienced rustic maiden, did not put so much restraint upon herself; and her conversation became, in a short time so strange, that, instead of relating it, we think it will be better to narrate the previous history of this unhappy person; as much, at least, as will explain what we have seen in her, which is unusual and mysterious, and the motives for her conduct in the facts we shall have to relate.

She was the youngest daughter of the prince of ———, a powerful Milanese nobleman, who passed for one of the richest individuals of the city. But the unlimited importance he attributed to his rank and title, induced him to look upon his substance as insufficient, and not equal to maintain the dignity due to his rank; all his cares, therefore, were turned to the preservation of his riches, such as they were, and to keep them together as much as depended on himself. How many children he had, does not appear very clearly from the story; we find, only, that the cadets of both sexes were destined to the cloister, that all the wealth might belong to the first born, he who was to perpetuate the family, that is to say, he who was to procreate children for the sake of tormenting himself and them in the same manner. Our unhappy Signora was not yet born, ere her fate was irrevocably fixed. It only remained to be decided whether she was to be a monk or a nun: a decision that awaited not her consent, but her presence. When she appeared, the prince, her father, desirous of giving her a name, that at once would awaken the idea of a cloister, and which had been borne by a saint of high lineage, called her Gertrude. Dolls dressed like nuns, were the first playthings put into her hands; then images in nun's dresses, accompanying the gift with admonitions to take great care of them, as of things very precious, with the affirmative interrogation of "Is it not pretty?"

When the prince or the princess, or the young prince, (for males alone were brought up in the house) wished to commend the good looks of the child, it seemed as if they could find no other words to express their idea, but with "What a fine mother abbess she will make!" No one, however, told her in direct terms—You are to be a nun. This, however, was understood, and only touched upon incidentally in every conversation respecting her future destinies. If at any time the little Gertrude acted in a bold and imperious manner, to which she was rather prone from her natural temper, she was told, "You are a little girl, and must not do so; when you shall be a mother abbess, you shall command with the rod, and rule every body." Another time the prince, reproving her for indulging in manners rather too free and familiar, and which her natural disposition led her to, said, "These plays are not suitable to one of your rank; if you wish people to pay you that respect which is due to you, learn from this time to impose some restraint on yourself: remember that in every thing you are to be the first in the monastery, for we carry our blood with us wherever we go."

All expressions of this kind, established in the mind of the little girl the implicit idea that she was to be a nun, but those which came from her father, produced a greater effect than all the rest. The manners of the prince were habitually those of an austere master; but when the subject of the future fate of his children was under consideration, from his countenance and from every word, an obscure jealousy of command, an immobility of resolution, were apparent, that impressed a feeling of fatal necessity.

At the age of six years, Gertrude was placed, for her education, and still more as the first step of her settled vocation, in the monastery, where we have seen her. The guide of the two women has said that her father was the first person in Monza, and putting his testimony to other facts picked up here and there, we have no difficulty in asserting that he was the feudatory of that country. However that may be, he possessed great authority there, and he thought that there, more than in any other place, his daughter would be treated

those distinctions and attentions which might tempt her to choose that monastery for her perpetual residence. Nor did he deceive himself; the abbess of that day, and a few other intriguing nuns, who had got, as the saying is, the ladle in their own hands, finding themselves engaged in a quarrel with another monastery, and with some families of the country, were glad to acquire such support, and accepted with much gratitude, the honor which was conferred on them, corresponding fully to the wishes the prince had expressed for the permanent establishment of his daughter: wishes, by the by, which accorded very well with their own interests. Gertrude, scarcely an inhabitant of the monastery, was distinguished by Antonomasia, by the name of the Signorina, or The Young Lady; a distinct place was assigned to her at the table, and in the dormitory; her conduct was proposed to the rest as an example: favors and caresses without end, sweetened, too, with a little reverential familiarity, which is so alluring to children, when it proceeds from those who they observe treat other children with habitual demonstrations of superiority. Not that all the nuns had conspired to entice the poor child into the trap; many there were of simple characters, and far from practising intrigues, to whom the very thought of sacrificing a daughter to interested views would have inspired disgust; but all these attentive to their particular occupations, partly did not see through this management, partly did not reflect how detestable it was, partly abstained from looking too curiously into it, and partly were silent to avoid creating useless scandal. Some of them, too, remembering well how they had been brought by similar arts to do what they had subsequently repented of, felt compassion for the poor innocent little thing, and thought to console her by tender and melancholy caresses, beneath which she was far from suspecting there was any mystery. And so things went on, and perhaps would have gone to the end, if Gertrude had been the only young girl in the monastery. But amongst her young companions who were there for their education, there were some who knew they were destined to be married.

Young Gertrude, brought up in ideas of her own superiority, talked magnificently of her future destiny as an Abbess, as the princess of the monastery, she was determined, at any rate, to be an object of envy, and saw with astonishment and vexation, that some of them would not look upon her in that light. To the majestic, but circumscribed and cold attractions, which the privacy of a nunnery suggested to them, they opposed the varied and brilliant visions, of husband, feasts, parties, villas, tourneys, gallantries, dress, equipages. These images produced in the brain of young Gertrude a movement and a buzzing, such as would be collected before a large bunch of newly gathered flowers, placed before a hive. Her parents and instructors had nourished and increased her natural vanity, to make the part she was destined for in the cloister more agreeable to her, but when this passion was still more excited by ideas she had a greater affinity for, she delivered herself up to them with an ardor and vivacity, infinitely more spontaneous. That she might not seem to be less fortunate than her companions, and to act in conformity to her new inclinations, she answered, that when the time should arrive, no one could make her take the veil without her own consent, that she too might have a husband, inhabit a palace, enjoy the world, and more even than any of them: that she could always have done it, if she had wished it; that she did wish it, and was determined to do so—and in fact she spoke the truth.

The idea that her consent was necessary, an idea that up to that moment had remained dormant in a corner of her mind, now developed itself, in all its importance. She called it up on every occasion to aid her in the more tranquil enjoyment of a grateful futurity. Behind this idea, however, there invariably appeared another, that her consent would have to be refused to the prince her father, who had it already, or who conducted himself as if it had been obtained; and at this last idea, the mind of the daughter was far from feeling all that security which appeared in her words. She then compared herself with her companions, who were much more secure about their destiny, and experienced painfully in relation to them, the envy, which at first she sought to inspire them with. Envying them, she hated them; sometimes her dislike manifested itself in spite—in ill-behavior—in offensive expressions; and sometimes, the conformity of their inclinations and their hopes appeased her, and gave birth to an apparent and transitory friendship. Sometimes, desirous of the present enjoyment of something real, she seemed to be pleased with the preference that was given to her, and made the others feel her superiority; and at times, not being able to endure the solitude of her fears and her wishes, she humbled herself to them, almost to the point of imploring their benevolence, their advice and support. Amidst these distressing contests with herself and with others, she had passed through her childhood, and had entered upon that critical age, in which a mysterious sort of power seems to be awakened in the soul, which raises up, adorns, and reinvigorates all the inclinations, all the ideas, and sometimes transforms them, or imparts to them an unforeseen direction.

That which Gertrude had up to this time most cherished in her dreams of the future, was external splendor and pomp; but now, that sort of soft and affectionate sentiment, which at first diffused itself through her like a gentle mist, began to unfold itself, and to predominate in her fancy. She had formed in the inmost recesses of her mind a sort of splendid retreat; there she retired from present objects; there she received certain personages

strangely formed out of confused remembrances of her girlish days; of that glimpse which she had been able to catch of the external world, of what she had learnt from the conversations of her companions; she communicated with them, she talked to them, and answered for them; there she gave her commands and received homage of every kind. From time to time, thoughts of religion came to disturb those brilliant and fatiguing visions. But religion, such as it had been taught to her, and such as she had received it, poor thing, did not proscribe pride, but rather sanctified it, and proposed it as a means to obtain earthly felicity. Despoiled then of its essence, it no longer was religion, but a phantom like her other dreams. During the interval between the time when these fancies first budded, and that when they took root in the mind of Gertrude, the unhappy girl, overcome by confused terrors, and urged by an ill defined idea of her duties, imagined that this repugnance to the cloister, and her resistance to the intimations of her parents as to the choice of her state, were sinful; and she promised in her heart to expiate her fault, by voluntarily shutting herself up in the cloister. It was the law that a young maid could not be received as a nun, without being first examined by an ecclesiastic, called the Vicar of the Nuns, or by some other person deputed by him, so that it might appear she was led to that state by her own free election; and this examination could not take place, but at an interval of twelve months after she had explained her desire to the vicar in a written petition. Those nuns who had taken upon themselves the wretched task to persuade Gertrude to come under an obligation for life, with the least possible knowledge of what she was doing, chose one of those moments we have alluded to, to get her to sign a petition of that nature. And to induce her more easily to do it, they did not fail to repeat to her, what indeed was true, that at best it was a mere formality, which could be only obligatory and efficacious, through other acts which would entirely depend upon her own will. Nevertheless, the petition, perhaps, had not reached its destination, when Gertrude repented she had signed it. Afterwards, she regretted she had repented it, passing, in this way, days and months in an incessant transition of inclination on this subject. For a long time she kept it a secret from her companions that she had sent this petition, sometimes from the fear to expose a good resolution to their disapprobation, and at other times from shame at having committed so great a blunder. At length, she became desirous of relieving her mind, and of acquiring advice and resolution. There was another law, that no maiden should come to that examination of her inclinations, but after a residence at least of a month, out of the monastery where she had been educated. The year since the petition was sent, was now almost expired, and Gertrude had been informed that in a short time she would be removed to her paternal home to stay a month, and take the necessary steps to the fulfilment of the work which she had in fact begun.

The prince, and the rest of the family, looked upon the affair quite as certain as if it had already taken place, but she did not consider the matter to be settled in that way. Instead of taking the steps which still remained, she was occupied with thinking how she could retract the first. In this strait, she resolved to open her mind to one of her companions, who was always frank and ready in giving vigorous counsels. She suggested to Gertrude to inform the vicar, by letter, that she had changed her mind, for she had not the courage to tell him at the time, to his face, I will not take the veil. And, because gratuitous counsel is very rare in this world, her adviser made Gertrude pay for her advice, by laughing at her for her extreme folly. The letter was concerted by three or four confidants, was written in secret, and conveyed to its destination by a little well contrived management. Gertrude waited with great anxiety for an answer that never came. But a few days afterwards, the abbess, taking her aside, with a countenance indicating concealment, disgust, and compassion, let a few obscure words escape of a great rage that the prince was in, and of some very extravagant things she must have done; giving her, however, to understand that if she conducted herself properly, every thing would be forgotten. Gertrude understood her, and made no more appeals in that quarter.

At length the day so much wished, so much feared, arrived. Although Gertrude knew that she was going to a contest, still, the leaving of the monastery, the very passing of the threshold of the walls where she had been immured eight years, the rolling over the open country in a carriage, the seeing of the city once more, and of her home, produced in her sensations of tumultuous joy. As to the contention, she, with the advice of her confidants, had already taken her measures, and arranged, as will be by and by shown, her plan. Either they will use violence, thought she, when I will be firm, but humble and respectful, yet refusing; or they will adopt gentle measures, and then I will be more gentle with them; I will weep, I will entreat, I will move them to compassion; finally, I ask for nothing except not to be sacrificed. But, as it frequently happens to similar pre-suppositions, neither one or the other of them was realized. The days passed away, without her father or any other person speaking to her on the subject of her petition, or of her subsequent communication to the vicar, or without any proposition being made to her, either in kindness or in anger. Her parents were serious, sad, sullen, to her, without ever telling her why. She only comprehended that they looked upon her as both wicked and unworthy; a mysterious anathema appeared to hang over her, and to

separate her from her family, leaving her in connexion with it only just enough to show how completely they considered her estranged from it. Seldom, and only at certain fixed hours, was she admitted to the company of her parents and her brother. In the conversations of these three there appeared to reign an entire confidence, that rendered the proscription of Gertrude more sensible, and more painful. No one spoke to her; the words which she timidly offered, when she was not compelled by necessity to speak, either fell unobserved, or they were met by a look, either absent, contemptuous, or severe. And when she, not being able to resist a distinction so humiliating and bitter, persevered, and attempted to become familiar, and implored a little affection for herself, she was sure to hear something, indirectly, but clearly said, about the choice of her future state, giving her to understand that there was a way to reacquire the affection of her family. Then she, who could not resolve to accept it on such conditions, was constrained to draw back, to refuse almost the first marks of kindness that she was so desirous of receiving, and to put herself back to her old position of an excommunicated person, with the additional distress of having the appearance of being in the wrong.

Such sensations springing from objects before her, conflicted painfully with the gay visions that had so much occupied, and that still occupied Gertrude in that secret corner of her mind. She had hoped that in the splendid and much frequented paternal house, she would have been able at least to convert into reality, a part of what had existed in her imagination; but she was entirely deceived. Her confinement was as complete and as strict at home, as it had been in the monastery; of amusement to be sought out of it, not a word was said; and a gallery which led from the house to a neighboring church, took away the only pretext that could have existed for even going into the street. Her company at home, was more melancholy, less numerous, and less varied, than in the nunnery. If any one was announced, Gertrude was obliged to retire, and to shut herself up with some old female servants, with whom she also dined when her father had any guests. The servants, in their manner and language, conformed to the example and designs of their superiors, and Gertrude, who, by inclination, would have treated them with a lady-like and reserved familiarity, and who in her unpleasant situation, would have been grateful to them for kindnesses which she even stooped to ask for, was humbled, and made still more unhappy, by witnessing their complete indifference, although it was accompanied by a sort of formal respect.

Nevertheless, she could not but observe that a page, very different from the rest, observed great respect to her, and felt a compassion for her of a marked character. The deportment of this youth corresponded more than any thing she had yet seen, with the nature of those imaginary existences she had cherished, and his countenance came nearer to that of her ideal beings. By degrees a change was produced in the manners of the maiden, a tranquillity, and, at the same time, an uneasiness at variance with her usual habits; she acted as if she had found something she set a great value upon—something she wanted to look at every moment, and that she wished no one else to see. Being now observed more vigilantly than ever, a chambermaid, who was watching her, surprised her one morning secretly folding up a sheet of paper, on which it would have been better if she had not written any thing. After a short struggle, the woman tore the letter from her, and gave it to the prince. The terror of Gertrude at the storming of his approach, is not to be described or imagined: it was her father, he was violently irritated, and she was guilty. But when she saw him, with such a brow, with the letter in his hand, she would fain have wished herself a hundred yards under ground, to say nothing of a cloister. His words were few, but terrible ones: the punishment intimated at the moment, was, merely being locked up in the room with the same woman who had exposed her; but this was only an essay, an expedient for the moment, she was darkly menaced with a chastisement of a different character, undetermined in its nature, and, for that reason, more dreadful.

The page was instantly driven out of the house, as a matter of course; and was also threatened with something terrible, if, at any time, he should dare to breathe a word of what had happened. The prince accompanied this intimation with two vigorous boxes on the ear, by way of associating with the adventure a remembrance, that might take away from the youth every disposition to boast of it. A good pretext for the expulsion of the page was not wanting, and as to the daughter, it was alleged she was indisposed.

She remained, then, with the discovery, the shame, the remorse, the terror of the future, and with no other society but the woman whom she hated, as the witness of her fault, and the cause of her disgrace. In turn, she hated Gertrude, on whose account she found herself reduced, without knowing for how long, to the tedious occupation of a jailer, and compelled to be for ever the depositary of a dangerous secret.

The first confused tumults of these thoughts, gradually subsided, but each of them returning to her mind by turns, grew into importance, and established itself there to torment her at leisure. What could that dark menace mean? Many, and various, and strange punishments occurred to the ardent and inexperienced fancy of Gertrude. That which appeared most probable to her, was being reconducted to the monastery of Monza. Not as the Signorina but as a guilty person, and

to be shut up there, how long she had no means of judging. And then what treatment would she experience! The most distressing part of such a contingency, so full of pain, was, perhaps, the apprehension of shame. The phrases, the words, the stops, of that unfortunate paper, passed and repassed in her memory; she imagined them examined and weighed, by a reader so unexpected, and so different from him to whom they were addressed in answer; she fancied that perhaps they had been shown to her mother, to her brother, even to others, and every fear was obscured by the shame of this. The image of the youth who was the cause of all this scandal, often came, too, to trouble the poor prisoner, and the contrast is inexpressible which this phantom made to those serious, cold, and threatening ones which occupied her mind: but exactly because she could not separate him from them, nor return for a moment to those complacent feelings he had inspired her with, without bringing up at once the present sorrows they had occasioned her, she began, by degrees, to indulge herself less in thoughts about him, to reject recollections of that nature, and to wean herself from them. Nor did she cherish any more those glad and splendid visions she once encouraged: they were too much contrasted with her actual situation, and were opposed to every probability of the future. The only castle where Gertrude could think of finding a tranquil and honorable refuge, and which did not exist in the air, was the monastery, whenever she could determine to enter it again, and for ever. Such a revolution, she could not doubt, would heal every thing, pay every debt, and change in an instant her situation.

Against this proposition, all her past hopes arrayed themselves; but times were changed, and considering the abyss where she had fallen, and in comparison with what she had to fear at certain moments, the condition of a nun, caressed, respected, and obeyed, appeared delightful to her. Two feelings also, of a very different kind, contributed at intervals to diminish her old aversion to the monastery; sometimes a remorse for her fault, and a sort of feeling allied to devotion; sometimes an embittered pride, irritated by the ways of the woman who guarded her, and who, although often provoked to it, revenged herself by alarming her with the menaced punishment, and sometimes by reproaching her with her conduct. When at other times she wished to appear more kind, she would assume a tone of protection still more odious than even her insults. In these different trials, the desire that Gertrude experienced to get out of her clutches, and to assume a condition beyond the reach of either her anger or her compassion, became at length so strong and lively, that all the means by which she could accomplish this, began to appear amiable to her.

At the end of four or five tedious days of imprisonment, one morning Gertrude, enraged and embittered beyond measure by the conduct of her keeper, took refuge in the corner of the room, and there with her face hid in her hands, remained some time, devouring her vexation. She felt, at that moment an irresistible desire to see other faces, to hear other voices, to be treated differently. She thought of her father, of her family; the thought recoiled upon her with disgust, but she recollected that it depended upon her to find friends in them, and she experienced a sudden joy. Then came a confusion and an extraordinary penitence for her fault, and a strong desire to expiate it. Not that her will had been then subdued to the point of forming that resolution, but it had never been bent down so near to it. She arose, went to a table, took up the fatal pen, and wrote her father a subdued letter, full of enthusiasm, expressive of much sorrow and hope, and finishing by imploring his pardon, and declaring herself indefinitely ready to do every thing that could please him from whom she expected forgiveness.

CHAPTER X.

There are moments in which the human mind, particularly with young people, is so disposed, that the least instance suffices to obtain from them whatever has the appearance of a sacrifice, or of being honorable to them, like a flower scarce yet unfolded, which gently abandons itself upon the fragile stem, ready to give its fragrance to the first slight zephyrs that breathe from around. These moments, which by others should be held in inviolable respect, are just those which interested cunning espies, and seizes at once, to subdue the unsuspecting will.

On reading the letter, the prince —— immediately saw the road open to his former steady wishes. He sent to Gertrude to come to him, and whilst waiting for her, concerted how he should strike the iron whilst it was hot. Gertrude appeared, and without raising her eyes to the countenance of her father, threw herself at his feet, and had scarce voice to say, "pardon!" He made signs to her to rise; but with a voice little calculated to encourage her, he told her that to ask and to wish for pardon was not enough; that it was very natural and easy for those to do so, who had committed a fault, that it was necessary to deserve it. Gertrude asked, submissively, and with trembling, what she must do to deserve it? To this, the prince—we have not the heart at this moment to call him by the name of father—did not give a direct answer, but began to talk at length of Gertrude's fault, and his words produced the same effect on the mind of the poor girl, that a rude hand does when passed over a recent wound. He continued, saying, "that if even," (an impossible thing,) "he should have entertained from the

first an intention of establishing her in the world, she herself had now interposed an insuperable obstacle; since a man of honor like himself, could never possibly give in marriage to a gentleman, a young person who had so far committed herself." The wretched listener was annihilated: then the prince, softening gradually his voice and tone, went on to say, "that nevertheless for every fault there was both a remedy and mercy; that hers was of that class for which the remedy was most clearly indicated; that she must consider this dreadful accident as a warning that a secular life was too full of dangers for her——"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Gertrude, shook by fear, prepared by shame, and moved at that moment by an instantaneous tenderness.

"Ah! you think so too!" he immediately replied. "Well, let the past be no more spoken of; every thing is cancelled. You have embraced the only honorable method, the only convenient one which remained: but since you have done it of your own will, and in a becoming way, it is my business now to see that every thing is accomplished in the most agreeable manner; it is for me now to give all the advantage and all the merit of the affair to yourself. I shall charge myself with that." Saying this, he rung a bell which was on the table, and said to the servant who entered, "The princess and the young prince immediately," and added to Gertrude, "they shall both of them immediately partake of my consolation, all shall treat you now as you deserve to be treated. You have experienced something of the severity of a father, but henceforwards you shall find in him every thing that is affectionate."

At these words Gertrude remained like one stupified, she began to think with herself, how that simple "Yes" could possibly signify so much: then she began to consider if there was no mode of retracting it, of circumscribing the meaning of it; but the persuasion of the prince appeared so complete, his satisfaction was of so jealous a character, his kindness was so conditional, that Gertrude did not dare to utter a word which might disturb him in the least degree.

The mother and brother now arrived, and seeing Gertrude there, looked at her with doubt and surprise. But the prince, with a cheerful and affectionate countenance which they soon put on likewise, said "here is the lost sheep, and I mean that this shall be the last word which shall recall painful recollections. This is the consolation of the family. Gertrude stands in no need of further counsel, what we desired on account of her welfare, she has spontaneously preferred. She is resolved, she has given me to understand she is resolved——" here she cast an affrighted and supplicating look at her father, as if to ask him to suspend his words, but he went boldly on "She is resolved to take the veil." "Brava, excellent!" exclaimed at once both mother and son, and each of them embraced Gertrude, who received their caresses with tears, that were interpreted to be tears of consolation. Then the prince went at large into explanations of what he would do to render the condition of his daughter a glad and splendid one. He spoke of the distinctions she would enjoy in the monastery and in the country, that she would be there as a princess, the representative of the family, that as soon as ever she reached the proper age she should be raised to the greatest dignity, and until then should only be nominally subject to others. The princess and the prince renewed at every instant their congratulations and applauses. Gertrude seemed like a person under the influence of a dream.

"We must now fix the day to go to Monza to ask the consent of the Abbess," said the prince. "How delighted she will be! I can tell you that the whole monastery will know how to place a proper value on the honor Gertrude does them. Indeed—why cannot we go this very day? Gertrude will be glad to take the air." "Let us go" said the princess. "I will give orders" said the young prince. "But," uttered submissively Gertrude. "Softly, softly," answered the prince, "let her decide, perhaps to day she may not feel so well disposed, and would prefer waiting until tomorrow. Say, shall we go to day or tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow," answered Gertrude, with a faint voice, who seemed as if she thought it was something to gain a little time.

"Tomorrow," said the prince solemnly, "she has decided that we go tomorrow. In the meantime I will go and ask the Vicar of the Nuns to give me a day for the examination." As soon said as done. The prince left the house, and went indeed (no small condescension) to the Vicar, and got his promise for the day after the next. During the remainder of that day Gertrude had not two minutes of tranquillity; she would have wished to compose her mind after so many commotions, to clear up her thoughts, to give some account to herself of what she had done, of what remained to be done, to find out what she herself wished, and to stay for a moment the impulse of a machine which though scarcely moved, had begun to advance so precipitously, but it was not possible. Occupations succeeded each other without interruption, and became enchased, as it were, within each other. After that solemn conversation, she was conducted to the cabinet of the princess, to be there, under her direction, dressed and arranged by the hands of her own maid. Even this ceremony was not terminated when dinner was announced. Gertrude passed between the bows of the servants, who seemed to congratulate themselves on her recovery, and found in the hall some of her nearest relations, who had been hastily invited to do her honor, and to compliment her on the two pieces of good news; her recovery, and the declaration of her intentions.

The young spouse,—thus young novices

were called, and Gertrude on her appearance was by all of them saluted with that name—had enough to do to answer to the compliments she received. She felt that every answer she gave was an acknowledgment and a confirmation, but how could she answer differently? Scarcely was the repast over, when the hour for taking a drive arrived. Gertrude entered a carriage with her mother, and two of her uncles who had been invited. After the accustomed turn, they arrived in the street called Marina, which then passed through the space now occupied by the public gardens, and where people of distinction assembled with their equipages, to recreate themselves after the fatigues of the day. Her uncles talked a great deal to her, as an attention due her on the occasion, and one of them who appeared to be better acquainted than the other with every individual, every carriage, every livery, and had something to say to her every instant about this one and that one, interrupted his relation all at once, and turning to her, said "Ah you young rogue! you turn your back upon all these follies, you are for going straight forward, you are for a life of blessedness, you are for going to Paradise in a coach and six, and want to leave us worldly people stuck fast in our perplexities."

Towards evening they returned home, and the servants descending in haste with lights, announced that many visitors were waiting. The news were abroad, and relations and friends had called to pay their respects. They entered the saloon, and there the young spouse was the idol, the delight of all, and the victim. Every one wanted to engross her society, this one exacted of her promises of confectionary, the other engaged to visit her: one spoke to her of mother such a one her relation, and another of mother such a one her acquaintance: this one praised the climate of Monza, and that talked to her with great earnestness of the primacy she would be raised to. Others who had not been able to get nigh to Gertrude, besieged as she was, were waiting an opportunity to speak to her, and somewhat vexed they had not been able to do it. By degrees the company went away, all of them without regret, and Gertrude remained alone with the family.

"At length," said the prince, "I have had the consolation to see my daughter treated with the distinction due to her. I must confess, however, that she also has conducted herself extremely well, and has shown that she will have no difficulty in filling the highest station, and in sustaining the consequence of the family."

Supper was hastily despatched that they might retire at an early hour, in order to be ready to start in the morning.

Gertrude, afflicted, piqued, and a little inflated at the same time with the court that had been paid to her during the day, now thought of what she had endured from the woman who had been her jailer, and seeing her father disposed to oblige her in all things but one, thought she would derive some advantage from her position, and gratify at least one of the passions which tormented her. She evinced therefore a very powerful repugnance to have that woman about her, and complained bitterly of her disrespect.

"How!" said the prince, "Has she been wanting in respect to you? Tomorrow, tomorrow, I will teach her her duty, in a manner she will not forget. Leave it to me, you shall have most complete satisfaction. Certainly a daughter with whom I am well satisfied ought not to have about her a person whom she dislikes." Having said this, he ordered another woman to be called, whom he directed to wait upon Gertrude, who, in the meantime, in the midst of the satisfaction which had been accorded to her, was astonished to find how little gratification she had received in proportion to the desire she had felt of revenging herself. What, however, in despite of her, engrossed all her thoughts, was a feeling of the prodigious progress she had made in that day on her way to the cloister; the thought that to retract now would require infinitely more strength and resolution than would have sufficed a few days before, and which she did not feel she possessed.

The woman who came to accompany her to her room, was an old family servant that had been governante of the young prince, whom she had received from the arms of his nurse, and had had the care of until his adolescence, on whom she had lavished all her kindness, and who was her hope and her glory. She was as happy at the decision made on that day, as if it had established her own fortune, and Gertrude, at the end of the day, had to listen to all the congratulations, the praises, and the counsels of the old woman. She talked to her of certain of her aunts and great aunts, who had been very happy when they became nuns, because, belonging to that house, they had always enjoyed the first honors, had always been able to keep one of their hands out of doors, and from their parlor had come out victorious from undertakings where ladies of the first distinction had failed. She talked to her of the visits she would receive; that some day or other, the young prince with his spouse, who would certainly be a personage of great distinction, would pay her a visit, and that not only the monastery, but the whole country would then be in motion. The old woman went on talking whilst Gertrude was undressing, whilst she laid down, and was still talking when Gertrude was asleep. Youth and fatigue had proved stronger than her cares. Her sleep was distressing, troubled, full of painful dreams, but was broken only by the sharp voice of the old woman, who came at an early hour to rouse her, in order to prepare for the journey to Monza.

[To be continued in No. 2.]

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"Up, up, my young spouse; the day has broke, and before you are dressed and ready, another hour must pass. The princess is getting up; she has been awoke four hours before her usual time. The young prince has already been to the stables, is returned, and is ready to go whenever the rest are. He is as lively as a hare—that young fellow—but he was always so from a child, and I may well say it, who have brought him up in my arms. But when he is on the move he can't bear to wait, for, notwithstanding his good nature, he gets impatient and noisy. Poor young fellow, he is to be pitied; it's nothing but temper; and then he has some some right to be so just now, for he really is incommoding himself on your account. When he is in these humors, it is best to have but little to do with him, for he minds nobody except it is the prince. But one of these days he will be the prince—at as distant a day as possible, however. Come, young lady, be quick, be quick. What are you staring at me so for, like an enchanted person? You ought to be out of your nest at this hour."

At the very image of the young prince in one of those humors, the other thoughts that had crowded together into the aroused mind of Gertrude, all took flight like a flock of birds at the appearance of a scarecrow. She obeyed, dressed in haste, permitted herself to be adjusted, and appeared in the hall, where her parents and her brother were assembled. She was placed in an arm chair, and a cup of chocolate was taken to her, a ceremony which in those days was equivalent to that amongst the Romans of conferring the virile garment.

When the carriage was announced, the prince drew his daughter aside, and said to her, "Come, Gertrude, yesterday you did yourself great honor—today you must surpass yourself. This is the day of your appearance at the monastery, and in the country where you are destined to play the first part. They are expecting you. (It would be superfluous to state that the prince had apprized the abbess the preceding day.) They are expecting you, and all eyes will be upon you. Dignity and ease. The abbess will ask you what you desire; it is an affair of formality. You can answer that you demand to be admitted to assume the habit in that monastery where you have been so affectionately brought up, where you have received so many kindnesses, that it is the pure truth. Deliver these few words with an unembarrassed air, so that it may not be said, they were put into your mouth, and that you can't speak of your own accord. Those good mothers know nothing of what has passed; that is a secret which must remain buried with the family. But do not wear a dubious and sorrowful face, that might occasion suspicions. Show from what blood you spring, be graceful, modest; but remember that in that place, except the family, there is no one superior to yourself."

Without waiting for an answer, the prince moved, and Gertrude, the princess, and the young prince followed him, descended the stairs, and got into the carriage. The anxieties and troubles of the world, and the blessed life of the cloister, chiefly for young people of noble blood, formed the theme of conversation during the ride. Towards the end, the prince renewed his instructions to his daughter, and repeated to her more than once the form of her answer. On approaching the place, Gertrude felt her heart contract, but her attention was immediately turned to some gentlemen, who, having stopped the carriage, addressed some compliments to her. They now proceeded slowly to the monastery, amidst the gaze of the curious, who had assembled from all quarters. When the carriage at length drew near to the walls, and stopped before the gate, her heart shrunk still more within her. They got out between two lines of the people, whom the servants caused to recede. All these eyes fixed upon the poor girl, compelled her at every moment to study her deportment; but more than all these, the eyes of her father kept her under restraint: to them, great as was the fear that governed her, she turned her own at every instant. His eyes governed the movements and the aspect of her own as if by invisible threads.

Having crossed the first court-yard, they entered the second, where they saw the door of the inner cloister wide open and filled with nuns. In front was the abbess, surrounded by the oldest; behind her, other sisters, mixed up together, some raising themselves up on tiptoe; and further behind, the lay sisters standing upon benches. Here and there, might be observed eyes timidly sparkling, and little faces peeping out of their cowls. The most courageous and lively of the young boarders were pushing themselves in between the nuns, and getting a good situation, that they might see something likewise. Acclamations came from the crowd, and arms were in motion, waving signs of exultation and of

welcome. Having reached the door, Gertrude found herself face to face with the abbess. After the first compliments, the abbess interrogated her in a solemn yet cheerful manner, and demanded—what she desired in that place where none could deny her any thing.

"I am here," Gertrude began, but at the instant she began to utter the words which were almost irrevocably to decide her destiny, she hesitated a moment, and remained with her eyes fixed upon the crowd that was before her. She perceived at that instant one of her old companions, who looked at her with an air of mixed compassion and mischief, as if she was saying,—Ah, my resolute miss, you have let them catch you, then! That sight awoke once more in her mind her old feelings, and restored to her a little of her ancient courage; she was even beginning to conceive an answer very different from the one which had been dictated to her, when raising her eyes to those of her father, as if to try her strength, she discerned there such a deep inquietude, and threatening impatience, that, urged by fear, she, as instantaneously as she would have fled from some terrible object, went on—"I am here to ask to be admitted to assume the habit, in the monastery where I have been so affectionately brought up." The abbess immediately answered, "that she regretted exceedingly in this case that the regulations of the monastery prevented her giving an immediate answer, which alone could be had from the common suffrages of the sisters, and which must be preceded by the permission of the superiors. That Gertrude was sufficiently acquainted with the sentiments that were entertained towards her in that place, to anticipate what the answer would be; and that in the mean time no regulation prevented the abbess and the sisters expressing the satisfaction they experienced at the request."

A confused noise of congratulations and welcomes was now heard. Large salvers full of confectionary were brought, were presented first to the young spouse, and afterwards to her parents. Whilst some of the nuns were snatching them away, others were paying their compliments to the princess and to the young prince, whilst the abbess requested the prince to come to the grate of the parlor, where she wished to see him. She was accompanied by two elderly nuns, and as soon as he appeared, she said, "Prince, it is in conformity with the rule—it is in the observance of an indispensable formality—although to be sure in this case—still I must say—that every time a daughter asks to be admitted to take the habit, the superior, whom unworthily I am,—is under an obligation to apprize the parents—that if—by—chance—they were doing violence to the inclination of their child, they would incur the penalty of excommunication. You will excuse me, if——"

"Very right, very right, reverend mother, I applaud your exactitude, it is just, certainly, but you—cannot—doubt that—"

"Oh! certainly, Prince, you cannot suppose—I have said so much on account of being precisely obliged to—as for the rest you know—"

"Certainly, certainly, mother abbess."

Having exchanged these few words, the parties mutually bowed and separated, as if the conversation was not becoming more agreeable, as it proceeded, and each rejoined their friends, one without, the other within the cloistered threshold. "Let us be gone," said the prince, "Gertrude will soon have every convenient opportunity to enjoy the society of the mothers. For the present we have incommoded them enough. And having bowed as if about to depart, the family moved; compliments were interchanged again, and they left the nunnery.

Gertrude on her return, had no great inclination to talk. Frightened at the step she had taken, ashamed of her want of resolution, angry against others, and against herself, she sorrowfully calculated the opportunities which still remained for her to say—no: and faintly and obscurely she promised herself that she would avail herself of one of them with dexterity and courage. Amidst these thoughts, she did not forget the dread which the frown of her father had inspired her with; so much so, that when she, by stealth, caught a view of his face, and saw that, instead of anger, it carried plain demonstrations of satisfaction towards her, she felt it as a piece of good fortune, and was for the moment perfectly content.

When they reached home, a tedious dressing, then dinner, then some visits, then the afternoon's ride, then conversazione, then supper, succeeded to each other. When this last was over, the prince introduced another subject, the choice of the god-mother. This was the term given to a lady, who, at the request of the parents, became the guardian and escort of the young novice during the period betwixt the request to be admitted, and the assuming the habit, a period usually passed in visiting churches, public palaces, conversaziones, villas, sanctuaries, every thing, in short, that was celebrated in the city and in the vicinage, so that the young novices, ere the irrevocable vow was pronounced, might see what sort of things they were renouncing. "We must think upon a god-mother," said the prince, "because the Vicar of the Nuns will come tomorrow for the formality of examination, and, immediately afterwards, Gertrude will be proposed for reception to the mothers in full chapter." Saying these words he turned to the princess, and she supposing this was an invitation to name some one, began—"there is—" but the prince interrupted her, "No, princess, the god-mother ought first of all to be agreeable to the young spouse, and although custom gives the choice to the parents, yet Gertrude has so much judgment, so much propriety, that she well deserves to be excepted from the custom." And turning

to her, as if he would announce a very especial favor, he continued "each of the ladies who were here at the conversazione this evening, possesses the qualifications requisite for a god-mother, to a daughter of our house; each of them, I must believe, would esteem it an honor to be preferred. Choosefor your self."

Gertrude felt that the act would be giving a new consent, but the proposition was made in so marked a manner, that a refusal might have had the appearance of want of respect, and the attempt to excuse herself, of ingratitude and fastidiousness. She took, therefore, this step as well as the others, and named the lady who that evening had been most agreeable to her, who had caressed her most, who had praised her most, who had treated her with those familiar and affectionate manners, which in the first moments of an acquaintance look so much like ancient friendship.

"An excellent choice" exclaimed the prince, who desired and expected she would name her. Whether it was art or chance, it had happened exactly as when a conjurer rapidly shuffles a pack of cards before your face, bids you think of one, and he will divine it: but he takes care so to shuffle them that you only see one. That lady had been so much about Gertrude the whole evening, had occupied her attention so much, that a very great effort of fancy would have been necessary to make it possible for her to think of any other. These attentions had not been paid without a motive: the lady for a long time past had cast her eyes upon the young prince as a future son-in-law: the temporalities, therefore, of that house, she looked upon with very great affection, and so it came very natural to her, to interest herself for her dear Gertrude, quite as much as for her nearest relatives.

In the morning Gertrude awoke with the image of the examiner who was to come, present to her mind; and as she was reflecting how she could use that opportunity so decisive to draw back, the prince directed her to be called. "Well, my daughter," said he, "up to this moment you have conducted yourself extremely well, today you must crown the work. Every thing that has been hitherto done, has been done with your consent. If any kind of doubt, any lingering regret, any girl's ideas, had occurred to you, it was your business to have explained yourself; but at the point where matters are now carried, there is no longer room for any foolish notions. The good man who has to come this morning, will interrogate you a hundred times upon your calling, and if you are doing it of your own accord, and wherefore, and how it has happened, and so on. If you are irresolute in your answers, he'll keep you at work Heaven knows how long. It would wear you out with vexation, and might be productive of still worse consequences. After all the public demonstrations which have been made, the least hesitation observed in you, would bring my honor in question; it might induce some to suppose I had mistaken some slight fancy on your part for a firm resolution; that I had gone hastily to work, that I had—I know not what they might suppose. In such a case I should be obliged to choose between two painful alternatives—either to let the world conceive a poor opinion of my conduct, a conclusion altogether inconsistent with what I owe to myself, or reveal the true motive of your resolution, and—" but here perceiving that Gertrude's face was suffused, that her eyes were swelled, and that her countenance contracted like the leaves of a flower in the heat that precedes the whirlwind, he changed his tone, and with a serene voice, said "come, come, every thing depends upon you, upon your judgment. I know that you have a great deal, and that you are not a girl to ruin what has been well done, at the last moment, but I must anticipate every thing. Let no more be said about it, and let us be agreed upon this, that your answers shall be frank, so as to create no doubts in the mind of that good man. In this way you will get through with him much quicker."

And here, after suggesting some answers to the contingent interrogatories, he began as usual to talk about the pleasures and the enjoyments that were prepared for Gertrude in the monastery, and consumed the time on this subject until a servant came to announce the examiner. The prince, after briefly recapitulating the most important hints, left his daughter alone with the vicar, as it was prescribed.

The good man came with a bit of an opinion of his own, already made up, that Gertrude felt a great vocation for the cloister, because the prince had told him so when he went to invite him. It is true, the good priest, knowing mistrust to be one of the most necessary virtues of his office, had for a maxim to be slow in believing similar protestations, and to be on his guard against prepossessions; but it very rarely occurs that affirmative and positive declarations, of whatever kind of persons in authority, fail in tinging a little with their own color the mind of the person who listens to them. After the usual salutations, "Young lady," said he, "I come here to act the part of the tempter, to put in doubt what in your petition you have rendered certain, and to place before your eyes the difficulties which stand in the way, in order to ascertain if you have considered them well. Suffer me to ask you some questions."

"Ask what you please," answered Gertrude.

The good priest then began to interrogate her in the form prescribed by the regulations. "Do you feel in your heart a free, spontaneous determination to become a nun? Have no threats or inducements been held out to you? Has the authority of any one urged you to take this step? Speak without reserve, and with sincerity to a man whose duty it is to

learn your true inclination, in order to prevent any kind of violence being done to you."

The true answer to these questions rose up instantly in the mind of Gertrude with a terrible force. To give such an answer, it was necessary to come to an explanation, tell what she was threatened with, relate her story. The unhappy girl turned away, frightened from this idea, and flew immediately to another that would quicker and better spare her such an effort. "I become a nun," said she, concealing her perturbation, "I become a nun, of my own accord, freely."

"How long is it since this thought occurred to you?" asked the good priest.

"I have always entertained it," answered Gertrude, feeling, after this first step, more at liberty to lie against herself.

"But what is the chief motive to induce you to take the veil?"

The priest did not know what a terrible chord he had touched, and Gertrude made a great effort to suppress in her face the effect which these words produced in her mind.

"The motive," said she, "is to serve God, and to fly the dangers of the world."

"Has it not been some disgust? some—excuse me—caprice? Sometimes a momentary cause makes an impression which seems as if it would be perpetual—and then when the cause ceases, the mind changes: then—"

"No, no," hastily answered Gertrude, "the cause is what I have told you."

The vicar, more with a view to the exact fulfilment of his duty, than because he thought there was any need of it, insisted on pursuing the inquiry, but Gertrude had determined to deceive him. Besides the repugnance she felt to communicate her weakness to a grave and good old priest, who appeared to be so far from suspecting her of any thing, the poor girl reflected, also, that even when he might prevent her becoming a nun, his authority, as well as the protection she could receive from him, would end there. As soon as he was gone, she would remain alone with the prince; and what she would have to suffer in that house, he would know nothing at all about, or if he should know, notwithstanding his good intentions, he would be able to do nothing more than to pity her. The examiner became tired of interrogating, before the unfortunate young creature was tired of equivocating; and finding her answers always consistent, and having no motive to doubt her sincerity, changed his course, and said what he thought was proper to confirm her in her good dispositions; and having congratulated her, took his leave. Crossing the hall to go out, he met the prince, who appeared there as if by chance, and offered him also his congratulations at the good dispositions he had found in his daughter. The prince to that moment had been in a very annoying state of suspense, but now he breathed again, and, forgetting his usual reserve, went in haste to Gertrude, overwhelmed her with praises, caresses, and promises, with a cordial sort of satisfaction, and with a tenderness in great measure sincere; so strangely is the human heart made.

We will not follow Gertrude in the continued round of spectacles and amusements; neither will we minutely relate, and in their order, the feelings of her mind during this period; it would be a tale of distresses and fluctuations, too monotonous, and too similar to what has been already related. The amenity of the situations, the change of objects, the delight of driving about in the open air, made the idea of the place where, at last, she must descend, and that for ever, still more odious to her. Still more pungent were the impressions she received from the assemblages and festivities of the citizens. The sight of those spouses, to whom this title is given in the more obvious and accustomed sense, occasioned an envy and an intolerable anguish in her; and, at times, when observing the aspect of some great personage to whom that term was addressed, she formed conceptions of them as being overwhelmed with happiness.

At times, the pomp of palaces, the splendor of their furniture, the buzzing and cheerful clamor of the conversazioni, communicated to her an hilarity, and so strong a desire to lead a life of pleasure, that she promised to herself to retract, to suffer every thing rather than return to the cold and dead shade of the cloister. But all these resolutions evaporated on the leisure consideration of the difficulties in her way, and at a single glance at the countenance of her father. At times, too, the thought that she must abandon for ever those enjoyments, rendered even the present taste of them bitter and painful; just as a feverish invalid beholds with anger, and almost repels with spite, the spoonful of water which the physician reluctantly grants.

In the meantime the Vicar of the Nuns had left the necessary attestation, and the licence came to hold a chapter for the reception of Gertrude. The chapter was held, and as might be expected, two thirds of the ballots required by the regulations were in the affirmative, and Gertrude was accepted. She, herself, worn out by the long struggle, then asked to be received at an early day into the monastery. No one of course was opposed to her desire, which therefore was granted, and at length, after being pompously conducted to the nunery, she assumed the habit. After twelve months of noviciate, full of regrets and repentance of those regrets, the time of profession arrived, a time when it was necessary for her to pronounce a *no* more strange, more unexpected, more scandalous than ever, or a *yes* so oftentimes repeated. She repeated it this time also, and became a nun for life.

It is one of the singular and incommunicable facultiés of the Christian religion, that it can lead and tranquilize any one, in whatsoever conjuncture, at whatever crisis, who has

recourse to it. If there is a remedy for the past, our religion prescribes it, administers it, affords light and strength to put it in operation at every cost; and if the past cannot be repaired, it suggests a mode of doing truly and effectually, what is said by man as a proverb, the making a virtue of necessity. It teaches us to pursue with wisdom what was begun with levity, disposes the mind to embrace with desire, that which has been imposed upon us by force, and invests, a choice which was rash, but which is irrevocable, with all the sanctity, all the resources, and, let us add frankly, all the enjoyments of the vocation. It is a road so constructed, that from whatsoever labyrinth, whatsoever precipice a man reaches and stands upon it, he can from that instant walk on it with security and pleasure, and terminate a cheerful journey in all happiness.

By such means Gertrude might have been a holy and contented nun, notwithstanding the manner in which she had become one: but the unhappy woman still struggled under her yoke, and thus felt still more bruised and borne down by it. The incessant recurrence of lost liberty, the abhorrence of her present state, a tedious wandering after desires that could never be satisfied, such were the principal occupations of her mind. She revolved over again the bitter past, rearranged in her memory all the circumstances which had brought her to the pass where she was, and a thousand times undid vainly in thought, that which she had made real by her action. She accused herself of cowardice, others of tyranny and perfidy, and preyed upon herself internally. She wept, whilst she idolized it, over her own beauty. She deplored that youth which was to be passed in a tedious martyrdom; and at certain moments envied every woman, of whatever condition, who had any excuse for enjoying those gifts freely in the world.

The sight of those nuns who had co-operated to bring her there, was odious to her. She remembered the arts and the schemes they had worked with, and paid them back with ill-turns, caprices, and even with open reproaches. It was generally more convenient for them to submit and to be silent, for though the prince had been forward enough in tyrannizing over his daughter in order to drive her into the cloister, yet having obtained his point, he was not a man to permit any one to claim to be in the right against his own blood; and the least resistance they might make might be the cause of their losing his powerful protection, or perhaps of converting their protector into an enemy. It would seem as if she might have felt a certain inclination for the other sisters, who had not stained themselves in the dirty intrigues of which she had been the victim, and who without having wished for her as a companion, loved her as such: pious, industrious, and cheerful, they showed her by their example, how even in such a place, life could not only be endured but enjoyed. But these were odious to her for other reasons. The appearance of piety and content they wore, seemed to reprove her inquietude, and her capricious deportment, and she let no opportunity escape of ridiculing them behind their backs as bigots, and of sneering at them as hypocrites. Perhaps she would have been less averse to them, if she had known or been able to divine, that the few black balls, which were found in the ballot box that decided upon her reception, had been put there by those very nuns.

Some consolation, however, she found at times, in commanding, in the respect paid to her within, and in the adulatory visits paid her by some from without; in originating some undertakings, in granting her protection, and in being called the Signora. But what consolation! The mind that felt its insufficiency, would have sought from time to time to add to it and to enjoy with it the consolations of religion: but these do not offer themselves save to those who renounce the first; as the shipwrecked mariner, who, to seize the plank which will conduct him in safety to the shore, must first loosen his hand from, and abandon the sea weeds and stems that he had caught at, in the excitement of instinct.

Soon after her profession, Gertrude was appointed to superintend some of the pupils. Imagine the state of these young persons under such a discipline. Her old companions were all gone, whilst she retained all the passions of those days, and in one way or another the scholars had to bear it all. When it crossed her mind that many of them were destined to that kind of life of which she had lost every hope, she felt a desire of vengeance, and a spite against the poor girls; humiliating, irritating, and making them pay in anticipation for those pleasures they expected to enjoy. Any one, at such moments, who had heard with how much magisterial anger she scolded them for every trifling mistake, would have supposed her a woman embued with a savage and unprofitable piety. At other times, the same horror for the cloister, for the rules, for obedience, broke out in excesses of humor of a different kind. Then she not only endured the noisy recreations of her pupils, but encouraged them; mingling in their games and rendering them still more disorderly: she would enter into their conversations, and carry them on to things beyond the intention with which they had begun them. If any one said a word about the gossiping of the abbess, she would go into an imitation of it, making a comedy of the matter, mimicking the face of one nun, and the deportment of another; then she would laugh without any restraint, though it did not come from the heart. Thus had she lived for some years, not having either the means or the opportunity to do any thing more, when her fortune so determined it, that an opportunity should present itself. Amongst the other privileges and distinctions which had been accorded to her, to compensate her for not being

an abbess, was also that of being lodged in a separate quarter. That side of the monastery was contiguous to a house inhabited by a young man, an avowed bad fellow, one of the many who at that period, with their ruffians, and with the alliance of other bad fellows, could, to a certain extent, laugh at the public force, and at the laws. We find his name in the manuscript to have been Egidio, and nothing more. This man, from a small window which looked upon the court-yard of that quarter, having observed Gertrude occasionally strolling there in idle moments, incited, rather than deterred, by the danger and impiety of the undertaking, one day had the audacity to address her, and the unfortunate creature was rash enough to answer him.

At first she experienced a sort of satisfaction, not very pure it is true, but lively. In the slothful void of her mind, an earnest occupation had infused itself, a continuous and powerful new principle; but it resembled those restoratives which the ingenious cruelty of the ancients poured out to the condemned, to invigorate and sustain martyrdom. A great novelty took place about this time in her behavior; she became at once more regular, more tranquil, desisted from her mockeries and complaints, and even became caressing and agreeable in her manners, so that the sisters congratulated each other by turns at the happy change, being far from imagining the true motive, and from comprehending that this new virtue was nothing but hypocrisy added to her other defects. This show, however, this external fairness, did not last a long time, at least not with the same continuity and equality: the old spites and the accustomed caprices soon broke out again; imprecations and ridicule against the cloisteral life were soon heard again, and sometimes expressed in a language unknown in that place, and strange to her mouth. Still at every excess repentance came behind; and a great solicitude to obliterate the remembrance of it by gentle conduct. The sisters endured as well as they could these changes, and attributed them to the capricious and light nature of the lady.

For some time it appeared no one paid any further attention to it, but one day that the Signora, having quarreled with a lay sister about some nonsense or other, forgot herself so far as to abuse her in a very extravagant manner, and without desisting: the lay sister having endured it a while and bit her lips, at length lost her patience, and threw out a hint that she knew something, and that at a proper time she would speak out. From that instant the Signora had no more peace. Not long after the lay sister was missing at the accustomed offices; they went to look for her in her cell, and did not find her. She was called for aloud, and did not answer: they sought here, they sought there, they rummaged in every quarter, above, below, from the cellar to the garret, and she was to be found no where. and who knows what conjectures would have been formed, if, whilst searching, they had not discovered a great hole in the wall of the garden, which induced every one to suppose she had eloped that way. Couriers were despatched by various roads to pursue and overtake her: inquiries were made at a distance, but the slightest intelligence of her was never obtained. Perhaps they would have been able to find out more, if, instead of looking at a distance, they had examined closer by digging nearer home. After much astonishment (for no one had supposed her capable of such conduct) and many arguments, it was concluded that she must have gone off to a very great distance. And because one of the sisters had said, "She has most certainly escaped into Holland," it was said, and believed in the monastery, that she had taken refuge in Holland. The Signora, however, it seems, was not of that opinion. Not that she appeared to discredit it, or to oppose the general belief with her own reasons; if she had any, certainly never were reasons more closely concealed: neither was there any thing from which she so willingly abstained as the revival of that story, or any thing about which she cared less than seeking the bottom of that mystery. But the less she spoke, the more she thought of it. How often during the day did the image of that female suddenly start up in her imagination, there plant itself, and remain immovably there. How often would she have preferred to see her stand before her alive, and in her real existence, rather than have her constantly fixed in her thoughts, rather than be obliged to find herself day and night in the company of that shadowy, terrible, and insufferable image? How often would she have wished to hear distinctly her true voice, her reproofs, whatever she could possibly threaten, rather than have eternally in the inmost part of her mental ear, the fantastic murmuring of that same voice; and hear words to which no answers were sufficient, repeated with a pertinacity, with indefatigable perseverance, that no living person was ever capable of.

It was about a year after that event when Lucia was presented to the lady, and had that conversation with her where we left off with the narrative. The lady multiplied her inquiries respecting the persecution of Don Rodrigo, and entered into certain particulars with an intrepidity that was something worse than surprizing to Lucia, who had never thought that the curiosity of nuns could be awakened respecting such matters. The reflections, too, that she mingled with her inquiries, and that she permitted to break out, were not less strange. She appeared almost to laugh at the great terror in which Lucia had always held that cavalier, and asked if he was deformed, that she was so much afraid of him; and seemed to think, too, that Lucia's reserve would have been both stupid and unreasonable, if she had not entertained a preference for Renzo.

on this score, too, she extended her inquiries in a manner to surprize and cover Lucia with confusion. Perceiving that she had permitted her tongue to deal too freely with the extravagant ideas of her brain, she endeavored to correct, and to put the best meaning upon her words; but she could not prevent Lucia from being struck with a painful astonishment, and a confused dread. Scarce was she alone with her mothor, when she opened her heart to her.

But Agnes, like a more experienced person, cleared up with a few words, all her doubts, and explained the mystery. "Don't be astonished," said she, "when thou wilt have known the world as much as I do, thou wilt find out that these are not things to wonder about. Gentlefolks, more or less, some for one cause, some for another, are all a little cracked. It is best to let them talk, especially when we want their aid; it is best to listen seriously to them, as if they were saying wise things. Did you hear how she gave it to me for talking, as if I had come out with something monstrous? I was not frightened at her. They are all so. And with all that, Heaven be praised that she has taken a fancy to thee, and means to protect thee in good earnest. As to the rest, if thou continuest to live, and hast any more to do with gentlefolks, thou'lt find out, thou'lt find out, thou'lt find out."

The desire to lay the father guardian under an obligation, the complacency protection inspires, the thought of the good opinion that would be created by a protection so piously granted, a certain inclination for Lucia, and also a feeling of satisfaction at doing good to an innocent creature, at giving succor and consolation to the oppressed, had really disposed the lady to take to heart the lot of the two poor fugitives. From respect to the orders which she gave, and the interest which she showed for them, they were lodged in the quarter of the fattora, near to the cloister, and treated as if they belonged to the service of the monastery. The mother and the daughter were delighted that they had so soon found a secure and honorable asylum. They would have been pleased too to have remained there unknown to every one, but the thing was not easy in a monastery, especially when there was a man too deliberately determined to find out one of them, and in whose soul, to passion and to the pique he first received, was now added rage at having been prevented and deceived. Leaving the females in their asylum, we will return to his place, at the very moment when he was waiting the result of his villanous expedition.

CHAPTER XI.

Just as a pack of hounds, after in vain following a hare, return chop-fallen to their master, their faces to the ground, and their tails dangling down, so in that night of confusion did the Bravos return to the palace of Don Rodrigo. He was walking backwards and forwards in the dark, in an old uninhabited room of the upper story that fronted the lawn. From time to time he stopped to listen, and to peep through the chinks of the decayed shutters, full of impatience and not free from inquietude; not only on account of the uncertainty of success, but also for the possible consequences, this being the most daring and gross piece of violence this worthy gentleman had yet put his hand to. He reassured himself, however, by thinking of the precautions he had taken that no traces might remain of his act, as to suspicions,—I laugh at them. I should like to know who there is bold enough to come up here to find out whether there is a young girl or no. Let him come, let him come, the impertinent fellow, he will be well received. Let the friar come, yes let him come. The old mother? The old woman may go to Bergamo. Justice? pah, justice! The podesta is not a boy, nor has he lost his head.

And at Milan? Who cares for them at Milan? Who would stand up for them there? Who is there there that even knows they exist? They are like people lost upon the earth; they have not even got a master; people belonging to no body. Go, go, there is nothing to fear. What will Attilio say tomorrow? He will see, he will see whether I am a man who talks and boasts or no. And then—if even there should be any trouble—what do I know? if some enemy should make an occasion out of this—even Attilio will be useful, the honor of all my kin is pledged to me. But the thought upon which he most dwelt, because in it he found both rest from his doubts and food for his principal passion, was the thought of the flatteries, and the promises with which he would sooth Lucia. She will be so much afraid to find herself here alone, in the midst of these fellows, these hard visaged —— by bacchus, I am the only human looking creature here—that she must have recourse to me, she will have to bend and entreat me, and then ——. Whilst he was coming to these fine conclusions with himself, he hears a noise, goes to the window, opens it a little, puts his head partly out—it is them—and the litter? The devil! Where can the litter be? Three, five, eight, they are all there, Griso is there too, but the litter is not there. The devil! the devil! Griso shall answer this to me.

As soon as they entered the house, Griso deposited in a corner of the room they came into, his pilgrim's staff, his hat and cloak, and as his charge imposed upon him—a charge that no one envied him—went up stairs to give an account to Don Rodrigo. He was waiting for him on the landing place, and seeing him approach with the stupid and awkward air the deluded villain could not divest himself of, "Well," said he, or rather screamed out to him, "signor boaster, signor captain, signor *leave it to me?*" "It is hard" answered Griso, remaining with a foot on the top stair, "it is hard to be paid

with reproaches, after working faithfully, and endeavoring to do exactly one's duty, and even risking one's bones."

"How did the matter go? Let us hear, let us hear," said Don Rodrigo, and went to his chamber, where Griso followed him, and soon narrated all his arrangements, what he had done, what he had seen, what he had not seen, heard, feared, remedied, and did it in such a manner, and with that confusion, and all that uncertainty and stupid astonishment, that were necessarily mingled together in his ideas.

"Thou art not in the wrong, and hast conducted thyself well," said Don Rodrigo "thou hast done all that could be done, but—but, that there should be a spy in this house? If there is, if I can discover him, and discover him we will if there is one, I will arrange him for you; I can tell thee Griso, he shall have it in high style."

"Signor," replied he, "I am not without that suspicion either, and if it is true, if ever a rascal of that sort is discovered, put him into my hands, sir, that is all. Any one who chooses to amuse himself by making me pass such a night as this, he may be quite sure I would pay him back again. But, taking it altogether, I think I can see there must have been some other trouble in the village, which now I can't understand. Tomorrow, sir, tomorrow the water will be clear."

"You have not been recognized at least?"

Griso replied that he hoped not, and the conversation terminated by Don Rodrigo giving him orders to do three things on the next day, which Griso might well have thought of himself. To send two men very early in the morning to give that intimation to the consul, which we have been acquainted with before: two others to the ruins to wander about in the neighborhood, and keep off any idlers that might arrive there: these men were to conceal the litter until the next night, when it would be sent for, it being for the present inconvenient to make any further movements, in order not to awaken suspicion. He himself was to sally out to collect information, and send others out also, of the clearest headed and most dextrous of their Bravos, to learn something of the causes of the strange confusion of that night. Having given these orders, Don Rodrigo retired to bed, and left Griso to do the same, dismissing him with many praises, as evident indications of his being restored to his good graces, and of a desire to excuse himself for the hasty reproaches with which he had received him.

Go, sleep, poor Griso! thou must stand in need of it. Poor Griso! hard at work all day, hard at work half the night, without counting the danger of falling into the clutches of the country people, or of adding another proclamation against him, for *the rapt of an honest woman*, in addition to those already out: and then to be received in that manner! But! that is the way men often pay for services. Thou hast nevertheless perceived that sometimes justice is done according to merit, and that balances are settled even in this world. Go and sleep for the present: another day perhaps thou wilt furnish us with other proofs of this, and of a more remarkable character.

The succeeding morning, Griso was already engaged in occupation when Don Rodrigo rose. He sought for Count Attilio, who, as soon as they met began to joke with him, and called out "Saint Martin!"

"I don't know what to say," replied Don Rodrigo, joining to him, I must pay the wager, but it is not that which vexes me. I told you nothing, I confess, I thought I would astonish you this morning. But—never mind, I will tell you the whole."

"The friar has had a hand in that matter," said his cousin, after listening with more attention, surprise, and seriousness than might have been expected from such a hair brain. "That friar" continued he, "that can put a face on like a dead cat, and talk in such a ridiculous manner, I take him for a starched intriguer. And you, you would not trust me, you have never told me frankly what he came here to trifle so about with you." Don Rodrigo related the conversation between him and father Christopher. "And did you endure so much?" exclaimed Count Attilio, "and did you let him go away, just as he came?"

"What would you? would you have me bring on my back all the capuchins of Italy?"

"I do not know," said Count Attilio, "if in such a moment I should have remembered that there were in the world any other capuchins, than that rash scoundrel: but let it pass within the rules of prudence; is the way to take satisfaction of a capuchin altogether wanting? The right moment must be hit for redoubling our politeness to the whole body, and then you may give a good substantial basting to one of their members with impunity. Enough, he has avoided the punishment that would have suited him best, but I take him under my protection, and I mean to have the consolation of teaching him how to talk to men like us."

"Don't put me in a worse situation."

"Trust me for once, I'll serve you as a relation and friend ought to serve you."

"What do you think of doing?"

"I do not know yet, but I shall most certainly serve the friar. I will consider, and—and my uncle, the count, who belongs to the secret council, is the man who shall do me this good turn. Dear good count, uncle! How I divert myself every time that I can get him to work for me; a politician of his calibre! The day after tomorrow, I shall be in Milan, and, in one way or another, the friar shall be taken care of."

Breakfast was now ready, but did not interrupt their conversation about an affair of such importance. Count Attilio expressed his mind freely, and although he took such a part as his friendship for his cousin, and the honor of the common name required, according to the idea he had of friendship and honor, still, now and then he could not help

laughing a little at the bad luck that his relation and friend had had. But Don Rodrigo, whose own affair it was, and who thinking to strike a great blow in a quiet way, had missed his aim and made a great noise, was agitated by more serious emotions, and distracted by thoughts of the most troublesome kind. "What fine stories they'll make out of it, all these bumpkins about. But what care I? As to justice, I laugh at it; there are no proofs, and if there were any, I would equally laugh at them. In the meantime, I have apprised the consul this morning, to be careful how he makes any deposition of what has happened. It would have led to nothing, but their gossipings, when they last so long, tire me. It is quite enough to have been so barbarously tricked as I have been."

"You have done exceedingly well," replied Count Attilio. "That said podesta of yours—that great obstinate, empty headed, tiresome bore of a podesta—but he is a right sort of man, one that knows his duty, and when one has to do with persons of that kind, one ought to be very careful to keep them in good humor. If a beggarly consul makes a deposition, the podesta, however well intentioned he may be, nevertheless must—"

"But you," interrupted Don Rodrigo, a little vexed, "you spoil all my work with your constantly contradicting him, and quarreling with him, and even making game of him when you can. What the deuce! can't the podesta be a beast and an ass, and still be a useful good sort of a fellow?"

"Do you know, cousin," said Count Attilio, looking at him with a comical sort of surprise, "do you know that I begin to think you are a little afraid? Why you think I am serious even about the podesta."

"Come, come, have you not yourself said that he must nevertheless—?"

"I have said so, and when any thing serious is under consideration, I will show you I am not a boy. Do you know how far I can resolve to go for you? I am a man to go personally and pay a visit to the podesta. Ah! will he be pleased with that honor? And I am a man to let him talk for half an hour of the count duke, and of our Signor Spanish Castellan, and to agree that he is in the right, even when he begins to tell his stupid ridiculous absurd stories. I will only throw in a word or two about the count-uncle of the secret council, and you know what effect such words produce upon the ears of the podesta. At the end of the account, he stands in greater need of our protection, than you do of his condescension. I will do things gently, I will go, and leave him better disposed to you than ever."

After these, and similar words, Count Attilio went out to the chase, and Don Rodrigo remained anxiously expecting the return of Griso. He at length made his appearance towards the dinner hour, and gave an account of his proceedings.

The uproar of that night had been so very great, the disappearance of three persons from a small village was so remarkable a fact, that the searches made for them, whether dictated by interest or curiosity, were naturally many, zealous and pertinacious; on the other side, those who knew a little, were too many to all agree to be entirely silent. Perpetua could not put her head to the door without being pestered with inquiries from this one and that one, to know what it was that had frightened her master so much; and Perpetua re-examining and putting together all the circumstances, and comprehending how she had been made a fool of by Agnes, was in such a rage with her perfidy, that she was really in want of an opportunity to break out. Not that she went about complaining to every body of the manner in which she had been bamboozled, she did not whisper a word of that; but such a trick played upon her poor master, that she could not pass entirely over in silence; and especially when the trick had been contrived and attempted by that quiet piece of life, that model of a young woman, and that excellent widow.

Don Abbondio might resolutely command her, and cordially intreat her to be silent, and she could tell him again and again, that there was no occasion to impress upon her a thing so very natural and clear; yet certain it is that such a secret as this, remained in the breast of the poor woman, like new made wine in an old and badly hooped cask, which ferments and bubbles, and works at such a rate, that if it does not force the bung into the air, still it is in such trouble that the froth escapes from between the staves, and drops in so many places that you can get enough of it to tell what sort of wine it is. Gervaso, to whom it did not appear possible, that for once he could be better informed than other people, to whom it appeared no small glory to have been excessively frightened, and who, for having lent a hand in an affair which he knew to be criminal, seemed to have become a man like the rest, was bursting with the inclination to boast of it. And although Tonio, who thought seriously about the possible inquisitions and processes, and of the account he might have to give, gave him precise orders with his fist in his face, yet it was not possible to stifle every word in his mouth. And at length Tonio, after having been on that night absent from home to an unusual hour, returning with an unaccustomed look and step, and with an agitation of mind that disposed him to sincerity, could not conceal the fact from his wife, who was not mute.

Who said the least was Menico, for scarce had he told his parents the story and the object of his expedition, it seemed to them such a terrible thing, that their son should have had any thing to do with spoiling one of Don Rodrigo's undertakings, that they scarcely permitted the boy to finish his narration. They laid on him the strongest and most me-

nacing commands to be careful not to give the least hint of any thing; and the following morning, it not appearing to them that they were sufficiently safe, they resolved to keep him shut up in the house for that day, and some others after it. But! even they themselves—talking over the affair with the villagers, yet without appearing to know more than the others, when they came to that obscure point of the flight of our three poor friends, and of the how and the wherefore, and the where, added, what was already almost known, that they had taken refuge at Pescarenico. Thus even that circumstance got to form a part of the common conversation.

With all these bits of information put together and united in the usual way, and with the fringe naturally attached in the sewing, there was enough to make up a story of a certainty, and a clearness more than ordinary, and with which even the most critical intellect might be satisfied. But that invasion of the Bravos, an incident too serious and too public to be left out, and of which no one possessed information in any degree positive, that incident it was which rendered the story obscure and perplexing. The name of Don Rodrigo was murmured, all were agreed in this; but for the rest, all was darkness and dissention. Much was said of the two Bravos who had been seen in the street at the approach of night, and of the other who was at the door of the village inn; but what light could be elicited from a dry fact like this. The landlord was asked who had been at his house the preceding evening, but he did not remember whether he had seen any body at all that evening, and always concluded that an inn was a seaport. Above all, their heads were confounded, and their conjectures baffled by the pilgrim that Stephano and Carl Andrea had seen; that pilgrim that the ruffians wanted to kill, and who had gone away with them, or who had been carried away by them. What did he come there to do? It was a pious spirit that had appeared to aid the women; it was a wicked spirit of some rogue and impostor pilgrim, that always appeared at night to join those that were doing things that he did when alive; it was a living and true pilgrim that they wanted to kill because he was going to alarm the village; it was (now only see what a conjecture!) one of the ruffians themselves, disguised as a pilgrim; it was this, it was that, it was so many things, that all the sagacity and the experience of Griso would not have sufficed him to discover what it was, if Griso had been obliged to depend upon their information to find out this part of the story.

But, as the reader knows, that which embroiled this matter so much for others, was exactly the clearest part of the whole to himself, using it as a key to interpret the other matters collected by himself, and by his subordinate explorers, out of the whole he was able to compose a sufficiently distinct relation for Don Rodrigo. Shutting himself up with him he related the attempt made by the two betrothed lovers on Don Abbondio, which naturally explained why the house was found empty, and why the bell was rung, without its being necessary to suppose there were any traitors (as these two honest persons called them) in the house. He told him of their flight, and even of this it was easy to find more than one cause; the fear of the lovers surprised in doing what was wrong, or some information about the invasion of the Bravos, given to them when it was discovered, and the village roused. Finally, he stated that they had taken refuge at Pascarenico, and further than that his information did not go.

Don Rodrigo was pleased at being certain no one had betrayed him, and at learning that no traces of his act remained, but it was a rapid and slight satisfaction. "Fled together!" exclaimed he, "together! and that villain of a friar! that friar!" the word came hoarsely from his throat, and muttered between his teeth, which were biting his fingers; his aspect was as brutal as his passions. "That friar shall pay me for this. Griso! they are not what I am—I want to know—I want to find—this very evening, I must know where they are. I have no peace. At Pescarenico, haste—to know—to see—to find. Four crowns immediately, and my protection for ever. This evening I must know. And that villain! that friar!"

Griso took the field once more, and the evening of the very same day he was enabled to bring to his worthy patron the information he wanted: and now see how this was done.

One of the greatest consolations of this life is friendship, and one of the consolations of friendship is having some one to confide a secret to. Now friends don't go in pairs like married people; every one, generally speaking, has more than one friend, so that a chain is formed, the beginning of which no one can discover. When, therefore, a friend procures to himself the consolation to deposite a secret in the breast of another, he gives to this one the will to procure for himself the same consolation in turn. He entreats him, it is true, to say nothing to any body; and such a condition, to any one who would accept it in the rigorous sense of the word, would cut short at once the whole course of consolations. But, generally, practice has established, that the obligation does not extend farther than not to confide the secret except to a friend equally trustworthy, imposing upon him the same condition. Thus from trust worthy friend to trust worthy friend, the secret travels on through that immense chain, until at length it reaches the ear of him or them whom the person who first confided it, never intended it should reach at all. It would, however, in most cases have to be a long time on the road, if every one had but two friends, him from whom he receives the information, and him to whom he communicates the matter to be

kept secret. But there are privileged persons who confide in hundreds, and when the secret has got to one of these, the directions it takes are so rapid and multifarious, that it is no longer possible to keep pace with it.

Our author has not been able to ascertain through how many mouths the secret had issued that Griso had orders to get at; the fact is that the good man who had driven the women to Monza, returning with his cart towards the hour of vespers, to Pescarenico, before he got home, stopped at a trustworthy friends, to whom he related in great secrecy, the good deed he had done, and what had followed; so that Griso was able, two hours after, to give Don Rodrigo information that Lucia and her mother had taken refuge at Monza in a monastery, and that Renzo had pursued his journey on to Milan.

Don Rodrigo experienced a wicked satisfaction at their being separated, and felt diabolical hopes reviving within him of attaining his ends. He thought of the means of accomplishing them a great part of the night, and rose in the morning with two plans, one determined upon, the other only sketched out. The first, was immediately to despatch Griso to Monza, to get clearer intelligence about Lucia, and see if any thing could be attempted. Ordering his faithful bravo then to be called, he put four crowns into his hand, and passed great encomiums on the ability with which he had gained them, whilst he delivered him his orders.

"Signor—" said Griso, hesitating.

"What? Have I not spoken clearly?"

"If your excellency could send some one else."

"How?"

"Illustrious sir, I am ready to give up my skin for my master, and it is my duty to do so; but I know that your excellency does not wish to risk the lives of your people too much."

"Well?"

"Your illustrious excellency knows very well that I have a few bad affairs upon my hands, and—here, it is true, I am under the protection of your excellency; there is a troop of us—the signor podesta is a friend of the house—the birri* treat me with respect—and even I—it does me no honor to be sure, but for the sake of a quiet life—I, treat them like friends. In Milan the livery of your excellency is known, but in Monza—I am better known than it is known. And your excellency knows, that—I do not say it by way of boasting, that whoever could consign me to justice, or present my head, would make a good job of it. A hundred crowns, one a top of t'other, and the privilege of getting two outlaws pardoned."

"What the devil!" said Don Rodrigo, "you turn out, then, to be one of those lazy dogs, that has scarce spirit enough to snap at the legs of any one that comes to the door, looking behind to see if there is any body to help him, and that has'nt the courage to go four paces from the house!"

"I believe, signor master, that I have given proofs."

"Then!"

"Then," Griso resumed boldly, being thus brought to the point, "then your excellency will just suppose that I have said nothing at all; the heart of a lion, the limbs of a hare, and I am ready to start."

"I have not said that you are to go alone. Take a pair of the best of them—Sfregiato and Tiradritto, and go in good spirits, and be Griso. What the devil! Three such looking men as you are, and who pass on quietly, who is there would want to stop you? The birri of Monza must be very tired of their lives to stake them against a hundred crowns, at such a dangerous game. And then beside, I don't think I am so entirely unknown there, that your being my servant should go for nothing."

Having made Griso this little reproof, he gave him more ample and minute instructions. Griso took his two companions and went away with a cheerful and bold face, but secretly cursing in his heart Monza, the rewards out against him, the women and the fancies of his patron. He went like the wolf exhaused with fasting, his stomach drawn up, and his ribs staring through the grey hair, when he descends from the mountain where all is snow, and proceeding suspiciously to the plain, stops from time to time with his paws lifted up, wagging his ragged tail,

"Raises his snout, and snuffs the faithless breeze."*

The which, whenever it brings him the odor of man or of iron, he pricks up his ears at, and rolls his sanguinary eyes, from both of which are glaring, eagerness for his prey, and the terror of pursuit.

As for the rest, that beautiful line, if any one wishes to know whence it is taken, I have it from a strange unpublished thing about the crusades and the lombards, which soon will be no longer unpublished, and will make a famous noise. I took the line because it suited my purpose; and I tell whence I got it because I do not wish to shine at the expense of another; and I hope no one will think that this is an artful way of mine, of insinuating that the author and myself are like two brothers, and that I rummage his manuscripts at my pleasure.

The other machination of Don Rodrigo, was how to contrive that Renzo, being now separated from Lucia, should never get nearer to her, nor ever set foot in the country again. He thought of spreading some reports of threats and plots, that getting to his ears by means of some friend, might take away even the inclination to return. The most sure way, however, he thought would be to get him sent out of the state, and to succeed in this he felt that it would be much better to make use of jus-

* Police officers.

* Leva il muso, odorando il vento infido.

tice than to employ violence. For example, some color could be given to the attempt that was made at the parsonage, it could be denounced as an aggression, a seditious act, and by means of the doctor the podesta could be made to understand that it was a proper occasion to issue a warrant against Renzo. But he soon was sensible that it would not do for him to meddle with such a scandalous proceeding, and so without tormenting his brains any more about it, he determined to consult doctor Azzecca-garbugli, as far as it was necessary to make him comprehend his wishes.

There are so many proclamations! thought Don Rodrigo, and the doctor is no ass; he will be able to hit upon something or other, some perplexity to contrive for that wretched fellow, or otherwise his name shall be changed. But (how the affairs of this world sometimes go) whilst he was thinking of the doctor as the most capable man to serve him in the affair, another person, one whom no one would have thought of, Renzo himself, was at work most cordially, to serve him in a way infinitely more certain and expeditious, than any that the doctor could possibly have contrived.

I have seen more than once, a dear little boy, as lively at least as there was any occasion for, but with every promise of turning out a good man, I have, I say, seen such a one, more than once, busy towards night driving to their pen his herd of little guinea pigs, that during the day had been left to run about in the garden. Fain would he drive them all together to their bed, but vain the attempt. One pushes off to the right, and whilst the little herdsman is running to get it back into the flock, another, two, three, go off to the left, and in every direction. So that after getting rather impatient, he follows their own plan, first drives them in that are nearest to the door, and then brings up the rest, one, two, three at a time, just as it happens. This is the precise mode we are obliged to adopt with our personages, having shut up Lucia, we ran after Don Rodrigo, and now we must leave him to look after Renzo, who is appearing before us.

After the painful separation that we have narrated, he pursued his road from Monza to Milan, with such spirits as any one may easily imagine. To go far from his home, and what was more, from his country, and what was still worse, from Lucia, and to be thrown on the road without knowing where he should go to rest his head, and all on account of that monster! When this image presented itself to the imagination of Renzo, he was overpowered with rage, and the desire of vengeance. But then the prayer in which he had joined with the good friar in the church at Pescarenico, came to his mind, and he became calm: again anger arose with him, but seeing an image upon the wall, he took off his hat and stopped a moment to pray once more, so that during the journey he had killed Don Rodrigo in his heart, and restored him to life again at least twenty times.

The road was at that time sunk down between two high banks, was muddy, stony, cut up with peep cart ruts that after a rain were filled with little streams, and in places where they were not ample enough to carry off the water, it was inundated and became a complete puddle, so that it was almost impracticable. At such places, a steep path, something like rough steps to the top of the bank, indicated that other travelers had got into the fields. Renzo having got up one of these to the high land, looked before him, and seeing that huge machine, the dome, by itself on the plain, as if it did not spring from the midst of a city, but of a desert, forgot for an instant all his troubles, and looked from a distance upon that eighth wonder, of which he had heard so much from his infancy. But after some moments turning round, he saw in the horizon that jagged chain of mountains, where he could distinctly see his own Resegone; the sight of it made his blood stir, and sorrowfully he looked upon it for some time, then turning, he pursued his road. By degrees he began to discover steeples, and towers, and cupolas, and roofs; he now regained the road, went on for some time, and when he perceived he was drawing nigh to the city, he addressed himself to a traveler, and saluting him in the most polite manner he knew, said "Will you have the courtesy, signor ——."

"What do you wish, my good young man?"

"Could you direct me the shortest road to the convent of the capuchins, where father Buonaventura lives?"

The man to whom Renzo addressed himself was an easy inhabitant of the neighborhood, who having gone that morning to Milan on some business, was returning in haste, without having done any thing at all, was very impatient to get home, and would willingly have excused Renzo from stopping him. Nevertheless, without showing any impatience, he answered with great gentleness, "My dear son, there is more than one convent, it would be necessary for you to explain to me more clearly which of them it is you wish to find."

Renzo now drew from his breast the letter of father Christopher, and showed it to the gentleman, who having read the direction "oriental gate," restored it to him, saying, "You are fortunate, my good young man, the convent you are in search of, is not far from here. Take this path to your left, it shortens the distance; you will find yourself before long, by the side of a long and low building, that is the Lazaretto, follow the ditch that surrounds it, and you will come to the oriental gate. Enter it, and after three or four hundred paces, you will come to a little square with some fine elm trees, there is a convent, you can make no mistake. God guide you, my good young fellow." And accompanying these last words, with a very gracious gesture of his hand, he went on. Renzo was both stupified and edified with the polite manner of citizens towards country people, he was ignorant that this was

not an ordinary day, and that it was a day when cloaks paid their court to doublets. Following the road pointed out to him, he reached the oriental gate.

At these words the reader must not let his fancy run upon the images now associated with it. Witb that broad and straight avenue flanked with poplars without, tbat spacious opening between two edifices begun, at least, with some pretension, to the glacis of the bastions, at the entrance, those two lateral ascents regularly sloping, leveled, ornamented with trees; that garden on one side, higher up, those palaces to the right and to the left of the great avenue of the suburb. When Renzo entered by that gate, the road without went straight on the whole length of the Lazaretto, which at that time could not be otherwise, then ran crooked and narrow in a lane between two hedges. The gate consisted of two pilasters with a shed at the top to protect the wood work, and on one side a small house for the customs. The approaches of the bastions descended in an irregular slope, and the ground was a rough and unequal surface, covered with fragments of stone and pottery thrown there by cbance. The street of the suburb which opened upon any one who entered by tbat gate, would not be very dissimilar to that which presents itself now to one entering by the tosa gate. A sort of canal ran down the centre until within a few paces of the gate, and thus divided it into two tortuous passages, covered with dust or mud, according to the season. At the point where was, and where still is, the quarter called Borghetto, the canal emptied itself into a sewer, and through that into another ditch tbat bathed the walls. Here was a column with a cross surmounted, called the cross of San Dionysius, to the right and to the left were gardens fenced in with hedges, and at intervals poor small houses, inhabited for the most part by washerwomen.

Renzo enters, passes, not one of the toll-gatherer says a word to him, this appeared very strange since from the few persons of his country who could boast of having been in Milan, he had heard wonderful stories told of the inquiries and interrogatories wbich were made there, especially of country people. The street was deserted, so that if he had not heard a distant murmuring which indicated a great movement, he might have thought himself in an abandoned city. Advancing, without knowing what to think of it, he perceived upon the ground certain white lines, like snow, but it could not be snow, snow does not fall in lines, and not usually at that season. He bent down over one of them, observed it, touched it, and found out that it was flour. Wonderful plenty, said he to himself, there must be in Milan, if the favors of God are scattered about the streets in this manner. And they told us that the scarcity prevailed equally all over, this is their way of keeping the poor country people quiet. After a few more steps, he arrived where the column was, and perceived at the foot of it something still more strange. He saw upon the steps of the pedestal certain things scattered about, which certainly were not stones, and which if they had been placed upon a baker's stall he would not have hesitated an instant to have called loaves of bread. But Renzo did not dare so soon to trust his eyes—why, what the deuce, that's not far from being bread at any rate. Let us see what it can be, said he, and going to the column, he stooped, and took one of them up; it was a real loaf, extremely white, and such as be was accustomed to only on solemn days. "It is bread in fact," said he aloud, so great was his surprise. Do they sow them in this fashion here, in such a year as this, without taking the trouble to pick them up when they fall? This must be the land of Cockaigne?

After a ten miles walk in the fresh morning air, the bread, as soon as his astonishment was abated, began to excite his appetite. Sball I take it? he considered with himself; Poh! they have left it bere at the discretion of the dogs, and a Christian may as well make use of it. And at any rate, if the owner should come, I can pay him for it. With this idea, he put in one of his pockets that which he had taken, took up a second and put it in another, began to eat a third, and pursued his way more uncertain than ever, and curious to find out the meaning of this. Scarce was he in motion, when he saw people advancing from the interior part of the city, and attentively observed those who first appeared. They consisted of a man, a woman, and a few paces behind, a young boy, all three with a load that appeared beyond their strength, and all three in a very strange figure. Their clothes or rags were all covered with flour, their faces also were covered with it, besides being in disorder and heated. Their gait seemed not only painful to them on account of the weight they carried, but distressing as if their limbs were chafed and bruised. Tbe man witb great effort carried on his neck an immense sack of flour, the which, through its various holes, permitted some of the contents to escape at every hitch, and at every motion. But still more extravagant was the figure of the woman; she had an immense corporation, and two arms curved out that appeared to support it with pain, they had the appearance of two crooked handles extending from the neck to the body of a great wine jar: beneath her bulky stomach two legs, naked to the knees, were seen staggering along. Renzo looked steadily at her, and perceived that her bulk was formed by ber petticoat which she held turned up, with as much flour inside of it as she could possibly cram, and a little more; so that from time to time some of it flew away. The young boy held with both his hands, a basket upon his head full of loaves, but his legs being shorter than those of his parents he remained a little behind, and urging his pace a little to overtake them, the basket lost its position, and some of the loaves fell out.

"What have you thrown some more down, you little vagabond?" said the mother, grinning with her teeth at the boy.

"I don't throw them down, they fall. What can I do?" said he.

"Ah! its well for thee, that I can't use my hands," answered the woman, shaking her fists as if she would give him a beating, and away went another farinacious cloud, more than would have made such loaves as the boy had let fall. "Come, come," said the man, "we'll turn back to get them, or some one else will get them. We have been stinting ourselves so long, now that we have got plenty again, let us enjoy it in peace."

In the meantime some more people from out of the city came up, and one of those accosting the woman, asked her "Where do you go to get bread? "Forward, forward," replied she, and when they were ten paces off, added grumbling, "These rascally country folks will come and sweep out all the bake houses and all the magazines, and there will be nothing left for us."

"A little for all, chatterer," said the husband. "Plenty, plenty."

From this and other similar things that he witnessed, Renzo began to perceive that he had got to a city in a state of insurrection, and that this was a day of conquest, that is to say, that every one helped himself in proportion to his will and his strength, giving knocks back in payment. How muchsoever we may desire to make our poor mountaineer cut a good figure, historical sincerity obliges us to confess that his first feeling was one of complacency. He had so little to congratulate himself about in relation to the old order of things, that he found himself disposed to approve of any change that might be brought about. And as to the rest, he, for he was not a man superior to his own times, lived in the common opinion, or rather the earnest belief, that the scarcity of bread was caused by monopolists and bakers, and willingly lent himself to the opinion that all means were just, which took from their hands the food which they, in his estimation, cruelly denied to the hunger of a whole people. Still he proposed to himself to keep clear of the confusion, and was glad that he was directed to a capuchin, who would give him an asylum and good counsel. Thinking in this way, and looking awhile at the new conquerors who appeared loaded with spoils, he proceeded on the short distance which remained to bring him to the convent.

Where now arises that beautiful palace with its lofty terrace, there was then, as there still was not many years ago, a small square, and at the bottom of it the church and convent of the capuchins, with four great elms standing in front. We congratulate, and not without some envy, those of our readers who never saw things as they were then, it announces that they were very young, and that they have not had time to commit a great many follies. Renzo went immediately to the gate, put away in his bosom that part of his loaf which remained, took out his letter which he held prepared, and rang the bell. A little wicket with a grate was opened, and the face of the brother who was the convent porter, appeared at it to inquire who was there.

"A countryman, who brings to father Buonaventura, a pressing letter from father Christopher."

"Give it to me," said the porter, putting his hand to the grate.

"No, no," said Renzo, "I am to give it into his own hands."

"He is not in the convent."

"Let me in, and I will wait until he returns," replied Renzo.

"Take my advice," answered the friar, "go into the church and wait, you can be doing yourself some good in the mean time. You can't enter the convent at present, at least." Having said this, he shut the wicket, and left Renzo standing with the letter in his hand. He advanced a few steps towards the church door to follow the advice of the porter, but it occurred to him he would take another peep at the riot. Having crossed the square, he reached the side of the street, and, with his arms crossed on his breast, stood there looking to his left towards the interior of the city, where the mob was thickest and most clamorous. The vortex attracted him: let us go and take a look—thought he, and taking his loaf out and mumbling it, he moved in that direction. Whilst he is proceeding, we will briefly relate the probable causes and principles of this popular movement.

CHAPTER XII.

This was a second year of scarcity. The preceding one had been to some extent supplied by the surplus of former seasons, and the population of the country, by no means enjoying plenty, yet not in a state of starvation, was at the period of our story, the harvest time of 1628, entirely unprovided for. This harvest, so anxiously looked forwards to, turned out still poorer than the preceding one, partly occasioned by the unfavorableness of the weather, (not only in the Milanese, but extensively around,) and partly by man himself. The waste and ravage of war, the war we have already spoken of, was such, that in part of the State near where it raged, a greater number than usual of farms remained uncultivated and deserted by the country people; who instead of laboring to provide their families with bread, were forced to go about begging. We say, a greater number than usual, because the insupportable burdens imposed by a cupidity and rashness equally enormous; the habitual conduct of the permanent troops, even when all was peace,

a conduct which the sad documents of that day compare to that of an invading enemy; and other causes not necessary to introduce here, were slowly producing that melancholy state of things throughout the whole Milanese territory: the particular circumstances of which we are now speaking, resembled the sudden irritation of a chronic complaint.—Scarcely was the harvest, such as it was, taken care of, when the provisions for the army, and the prodigal waste incident thereto, diminished the amount so much that the supply began to fail; and with want came the distressing, yet salutary and inevitable effect, a great rise in the price of provisions.

When the dearth reaches a certain point, an opinion always springs up with the multitude, that it is not caused by a real scarcity. They forget that it had been apprehended, had been predicted; they suppose all at once that there is an abundance of grain, and that the evil arises from its not being sold in sufficient quantities for consumption; suppositions entirely unreasonable, but which flatter both their anger and their hopes. The monopolisers of grain, real or imaginary, the proprietors of land who did not sell all their grain at once, the bakers who bought it—all, in fact, who possessed either a large or a small quantity, or who were reported to possess it, had all the blame laid upon them; they were the objects of every one's complaint, and the abomination of all men, whether well or ill-dressed. Men talked of their storehouses, their propped up granaries, heaped and choaked with grain: the immense number of bags was stated, and the precise and wonderful quantity of corn secretly sent into other countries, in the which it was equally probable they were crying out with the same correctness and clamor, that all the grain they produced was sent to Milan.

Then the magistrates were implored to establish regulations, which always appear to the multitude, or at least have always hitherto appeared, so equitable, so simple, so effectual towards bringing that grain out, which, as they said, was now hid in the ground, walled up, buried, and which would reproduce abundance. The magistrates were not idle, they limited the prices upon some commodities, and imposed penalties upon those who refused to sell; but as all human regulations however clever they may be, certainly have not the talent of keeping off hunger, nor of making grain grow out of season; and as those in question had not the power of bringing provisions from places where they might be in abundance, the evil continued and kept increasing. This was attributed by the multitude to the remedies being too few and too inefficient, and they cried aloud for more liberal and decisive ones. It was their misfortune to find a man just such as suited them for the occasion.

In the absence of the governor, Don Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, who was in camp near the village of Montferrât, the great chancellor Antonio Ferrer, also a Spaniard, occupied his place in Milan. He knew (and who could be ignorant of it?) that a moderate price for bread is a very desirable sort of thing, and that by an order from him, (here was his blunder,) he could establish it. He fixed the meta* (the term applied to the tariff for food) of bread, at the price it would have borne if corn had generally been selling at thirty-three livres the moggio,† whilst in fact it was selling at eighty livres. A measure as effectual as that of a woman, no longer a chicken, would be, who would try to become young again by altering the date of her baptismal register.

Orders less insane and less unjust had more than once remained unexecuted by the impossibility of their execution, but the multitude watched over this: what they wanted had now become law, and they were determined it should not be evaded. They ran instantly to the furnaces to demand bread at the taxed price, and required it in a manner as resolute and threatening, as passion, law, and physical force united, enabled them to do. It may be imagined how the bakers remonstrated. It was with them nothing but exertion, putting bread in the ovens and taking it out again without resting; for the people having a confused notion that the order was a violent one, besieged the bakehouses continually, that they might have the benefit of this temporary chance: it may be supposed, then, that this incessant laboring and working in such a losing business, was not very amusing to the bakers. On one side the magistrates were threatening penalties, on the other the people were pressing and complaining at the least hesitation to comply with their desires; and even deafening them with threats of administering justice with their own hands, certainly the worst mode in which it is administered in this world: there was no escaping, and so they had to keep on baking and selling. But to carry on work after this plan, something more than severe orders and fearful apprehensions, were necessary, the ability to do it was essential; and if things had gone on in this way a short time longer, that ability would have failed them.

Incessantly did they urge the iniquity and the insupportableness of the task imposed upon them, declaring that they must throw their tools in the ovens and relinquish the trade; still they got on as well as they could, hoping that at some lucky moment or another the great chancellor would come to his wits again. But Antonio Ferrer, who was what now would be called a firm man, answered that the bakers in times past had done exceedingly well, that in time to come they would do a great deal better, and that perhaps it would be taken into consideration to give them some indemnification; but in the mean time they must go on baking. Whether, indeed, he entertained the

* Limit. † A Milanese bushel or measure.

opinions he endeavored to inspire others with, or knowing from what he perceived, that it was impossible to sustain the regulation, and so wanted to shift the odium of recalling it upon another, no one can tell; but the fact is he did not modify at all the orders he had issued; and the decurions (a municipal magistracy composed of the nobility, that existed up to the year 1796) gave the governor, by letter, information of the present state of things, that he might devise some expedient to tranquilize all.

Don Gonzalo, who was over head and ears in warlike affairs, did what may be easily imagined: he named a commission upon which he conferred authority to establish a price for bread that would be satisfactory to all parties. Having assembled or, (after the Spanish phraseology of that day,) formed themselves into a junta, and after all sorts of compliments and preambles, and doubts, and difficulties, and concessions, finding that something must be done, although it was a great game they were playing at, they concluded upon raising the price of bread. The bakers now breathed, but the people became enraged.

The evening preceding the day on which Renzo reached Milan, the streets and the squares swarmed with men, full of indignation, their minds filled with one common thought: whether acquaintances or strangers to each other, they got into groups without any previous concert, almost without perceiving it, just as drops of water run down into one another. Every speech served to inflame more and more the auditory as well as the speakers. Amidst so much excitement, however, there were some more cold blooded, who looked on with singular satisfaction as they saw the waters becoming more and more troubled: these sought to increase the confusion by their reasoning, and by the news which such fellows know how to fabricate for the excited minds of others; and they proposed not to let the waters abate until they had fished in them.

Thousands of men laid down to sleep with an unsettled feeling that it was necessary to do something, and that something would be done. They began to assemble before sunrise—children, women, men, old people, working men, and beggars crowded together at a venture: here whispers and loud voices were mixed up together; there whilst one was holding forth, the rest were applauding: this one repeated to the one next to him the inquiry which had been made of himself, whilst another echoed the exclamation which had reached his own ears: every where disputes, threats, and expressions of wonder were heard, though a very small number of words formed the materials of all this discussion.

Nothing was wanting but some slight thing, by way of impulse, to turn all these words into actions, and that was not long in coming. Towards day the baker's boys issued from the shops, each of them with a pannier on his back full of bread, on their way to serve their usual consumers. The first appearance of one of these unfortunate fellows near one of these groups, produced the same effect as a lighted cracker would do if it was to skip into a gunpowder manufactory. "Here's bread at any rate," cried out a hundred voices at once. "Yes, for the tyrants that are glutted with abundance and would let us die of hunger," said one of them; and approaching the boy, he lifted his hand up to the mouth of the pannier, and giving it a pull, said "Let us see." The boy turned red, and then white, trembled, wished to say "let me go on," but the words died in his mouth, he slackened his arms, and endeavored to extricate them from the girdle. "Down with the pannier," was the cry. It was seized and pulled to the ground, the covering torn off, and the grateful smell of bread was perceived around. "We are Christians too, and must have bread to eat," said the first, and taking a loaf, and showing it to the crowd, he began to eat. Then the rest seized it also, and the contents of the pannier disappeared almost in an instant. Those who got none, enraged at the good luck of the others, and encouraged by the success of the undertaking, went in crowds after other panniers, and emptied every one that they met with. In some instances those who carried them were ill-treated, and those who had the bad luck to be out, and who saw what wind was blowing, laid down their load, and took to flight. Of the mob, those who had not come in for a share of the plunder were the most numerous, neither were the others satisfied with what they had got; and mixed up with these, were some, who had laid their plans to take still greater advantage of the disorder, "To the bakeries, to the bakeries!" became the general cry.

In the street called Corsia de'Servi, there was a bakery, and there is still one at this day bearing the same name, a name which in the Tuscan dialect means, Il forno delle Grucce;* but which in the Milanese is expressed by such whimsical and rude words, that the alphabet has no characters to express the manner in which they are pronounced.† There the crowd went. The people belonging to the shop were interrogating the boy who had come back without his pannier, and who, quite pale and with his dress in disorder, was endeavoring to explain what had befallen him, when the rumor of a great crowd in motion was heard, increasing and drawing nearer: soon the leaders of the mob appeared.

"Quick, quick, shut up the shop!" One ran to get help from the *capitano di justizia*,‡ the others closed up the premises, barricading and propping up the doors in the inside. The multitude in front began to thicken, and to cry out, "Bread, bread, open the shop, open the shop!"

And now arrives the capitano in the midst

* The bakery of Crutches.
† El prestin di scanse. ‡ Captain of justice.

of a company of halberdiers. "Room, room, my sons: go home, go home, make room for the capitano," he and his men called out. The mob, not yet firm in any purpose, gave way a little, so that the soldiers reached the shop and stood with their backs against the door, in as good order as they were able to do. "But, my sons," said the capitano from thence, "what are you doing here? go home, go home. Have you not the fear of God before you? What will the king our master, say? We don't mean to hurt you, but you must go home. That's good fellows! What in the deuce's name do you want to do here, as thick as peas in a bag? Nothing that's good either for the soul or the body. Go home! go home!" But those who stood opposite to him, and heard his words, if even they had been disposed to obey him, could not possibly have done it, urged and thrust on as they were by those immediately behind them, who themselves were pushed by others, as waves are by waves, to the very extremity of the crowd, which was continually increasing. The capitano was beginning to be tired of his situation. "Force them back a little," said he to the halberdiers, "that I may breathe, but hurt no one. Let us try to get into the shop; knock at the door—make them keep back."

"Keep back! keep back!" cried out the halberdiers, closing up against the foremost, and pushing them with the butt end of their arms. These shouted, drew back as well as they could, pushing the rest, driving their elbows into their stomachs, and treading on the feet of those who were behind: there was such a shoving and squeezing, and so much trouble, that those in the middle would have been willing even to have paid something to get out. In the mean time, a little space having been got near the door, the capitano knocked and thumped, and called out to them to open it, and those within perceiving his situation from the windows, ran down stairs, let him in, and then his men, the rear keeping the crowd off with their arms. When all had got in, the fastenings were replaced, the capitano ran up stairs, and rushed to one of the windows. What a commotion!

"My sons," he screamed out, and some of them looked up, "my sons, go home. Every one will be pardoned who goes immediately home."

"Bread! bread! open the door! open the door!" were the words most distinctly heard, that from the dreadful storm of vociferation the crowd sent back.

"Have a care, my sons, be prudent, don't go too far. Come, come, return to your homes. You shall have bread, but not in this manner. Hallo! hallo! what are you doing below there? at the door there? I see you, be prudent! don't go too far, you are acting in a very criminal way. I shall come down. Throw that iron away, and take your hands off. Hallo! what? Milanese too, men that are famous all over the world for being peaceable. Hear! hear! You have always been till now the most *******. Cursed scoundrels that you are!"

This very quick change in his style, was occasioned by a stone sent by one of those men famous for being peaceable, and which struck the captain on the left side of his brow, where the metaphysical organs are supposed to lie. "Rascals, scoundrels!" he kept exclaiming, shutting the window in a rage, and getting away from it. But his imprecations, if he had favored them with as many as he could get out of his throat, would all have been wasted in the air, and driven back by the tumult that raged below. He was able to relate, however, that he had seen a quantity of stones and iron in the possession of the people, the first things they had been able to lay their hands on, and which they were applying to the door and the windows, to force them in, and indeed the work was somewhat advanced.

In the mean time, the proprietors and the people of the bakery, who had placed themselves at the windows of the upper story with a parcel of stones that they had probably taken up from the court-yard, vociferated back again, and made signs to those below to desist, threatening to fling their stones at them; and seeing that it was all in vain, they began to throw them in good earnest. Every one of them took effect, for the crowd was stowed so thick that a grain of millet could not have reached the ground without hitting some one.

"Ah! you villains! you thieves! Is this the bread you give to poor people? Oh dear! oh! now, now! all together!" they screamed from below. Several were wounded, two boys were killed. Rage increased the strength of the mob, the doors were forced, the iron bars broke, and the crowd rushed in at every openiug. Those within seeing how badly their affairs were going on, sought refuge in the garret. The capitano, the halberdiers, and some of the people of the house hid themselves in a corner under the roof of the house: others, again, crept out at the sky lights, and got on the roof like cats.

The sight of their prey caused the conquerors to forget their design of taking a sanguinary revenge: flying to the shelves, they were soon robbed of every thing they had. Some of them, however, quickly forced the fastenings of the till, thrust their hands into it, pocketed what they had got, and then went to plunder the loaves if they could find any. The mob scattered themselves through the interior of the bakery, Some dragged out the bags of flour, others tumbled them over, untied the mouths, and flung away part of the contents, in order to reduce the weight sufficiently to enable a man to carry one off; whilst others, screaming "Stop, stop," after him, caught in their clothes, or any thing at hand, the flour that was wasting. Some of the mob got on the kneading trough, snatched an armful of dough, and ran off with it whilst it was dropping all around. Another seized the bolt-

ing cloth and went off with it, lifted in the air. Men, women, children—going, coming, ordering, pushing one another about, amidst a cloud of flour, rising and settling all over, and covering and whitening every thing. Without, the mob was composed of two streams of people, that were driving against and embarrassing each other; those rushing out with their plunder, and those who were entering to get some.

Whilst this bakery was thus ransacked, the others were far from being quiet and out of danger. But at none of them had the people collected in sufficient numbers to venture to attack them. At some of them the proprietors had got some assistance, and stood on the defensive, whilst at others, where they were weaker, and more apprehensive, they had come to a sort of compromise, and distributed a little bread to those who had begun to assemble round the shops, so as to induce them to retire, not so much because they were content with what they had obtained, but because the halberdiers and the police, who had kept at a pretty good distance from the serious aspect of things at the Bakery of the Grucce had assembled in sufficient force to keep in check the mutinous groups at the others. So that the confusion and concourse of people kept always increasing at that unfortunate place, for all whose fingers were itching, and who felt in themselves an inclination to be enterprising, went there, where their friends were in force, and where things could be done with impunity.

This was the state of things when Renzo, having finished eating his bread, went up the suburb of the oriental gate, directing his course without being aware of it, exactly to the place of tumult. He went on, sometimes delayed, sometimes hurried on by the crowd, looking about and listening, and trying to discover out of the uproar some precise information of the state of things. And the amount that he gathered out of the talking he heard, was as follows:

"We have found out now," said one, "the infamous imposture of those scoundrels, who said that there was neither bread, nor flour, nor grain. The matter is plain and clear now, and they can't tell us so any more. Viva 'abbondanza!"*

"I tell you all this serves to no purpose," said another, "it is a hole in the water, and it won't even be that, if we don't take summary justice. Bread will be cheap, but they will put poison into it, to kill the poor just as they do flies. Don't they say that we are too numerous? Havn't they said so at the Giunta? I know it is so. Havn't I heard it with my own ears from an acquaintance of mine, who is a friend to a relation of a scullion that lives with one of those rich men?"

Another foaming at the mouth said things that won't bear repeating, holding a ragged handkerchief on his head, his hair all dishevelled and bloody; whilst one of his neighbors applauded him, by way of consolation.

"Make room, make room, Signori, if you please, in courtesy; make way for a poor father who is carrying something to eat to his five children," said another, who came staggering under a great sack of flour; and every one moved to let him pass.

"Me?" said another, in a lower tone of voice to his companion, "I shall not commit myself. I am a man of the world, and I know how things of this kind turn out. These thick headed fools that are blustering now, tomorrow will stay at home frightened to death. I have already observed certain honest phizzes prowling about, observing who is here and who is not here; when it is all over, they'll make their report, and it will be all the worse for some of them." "He who protects the bakers," screamed out one who attracted the attention of Renzo, "is the *Vicario di provisione*."* "They are all villains together," said another nigh him. "Yes, but he is the head of them," answered the first.

The vicario was chosen every year by the governor, out of a list of six noblemen formed by the council of decurions; he was the president of this council, and of the tribunal of provisions; the which, also composed of twelve noblemen, was charged, along with other duties, principally with that of seeing the city supplied. A functionary of this kind, was necessarily, at a period of so much ignorance and want, charged with being the cause of the evil, unless indeed he had followed the example of Ferrer, a thing which did not fall within his duty, if even he could have thought of it.

"Cheating rascals!" exclaimed another, "could any body have behaved worse? Why they have gone so far as to say that the great chancellor has got into his second childhood, just to discredit him, and to get the command themselves. We ought to get a great hen-coop and shut them up in it, and feed them on vetches and cockle seeds, as they want to feed us." "Bread, indeed?" said one who was hurrying on, "Bread?" stone loaves flung at one! stones of that size, coming down like hail! oh, my poor ribs, I wish I was at home!"

Amidst expressions of this kind, from which it is difficult to say whether he was most confused or instructed, and the jostling he got, Renzo at last got to the bakery. The mob had begun to thin off, so that he could have a fair view of the recent destruction of the premises. The walls battered, and the plaster knocked off by stones and bricks, the windows torn to pieces, and the door broken in. This is a bad way of remedying things, thought Renzo; if they treat all the bakeries in this way, where will any bread be made? In the wells?

Every now and then some one came out of the house carrying part of a chest or a knead-

* Hurrah, for abundance!

* Vicar of provisions.

ing trough, or a cloth, or a basket, or something belonging to the unfortunate bakery, and bawling out, "Make room, make room," passed through the crowd. They all went in the same direction, to a particular place, where they stopped. Renzo wanted to see also the reason of this, and followed one of them, who, with a heap of broken plank and pieces of wood on his shoulders, was going in the same direction as the rest, along the street that passes the north side of the cathedral, and takes its name from the steps* that were there, even a short time ago. Our young mountaineer, being arrived before this great edifice, notwithstanding his desire to see what was going on, could not help stopping a moment to stare at the dome with his mouth wide open. He quickened, however, his steps, to get up with the man he had followed, turned the corner, gave a glance at the great front of the cathedral, which was far from being finished even then, and kept behind the man who was drawing near to the centre of the square. The mob thickened as he went on, but they made way for the man, who making a track through this ocean of people, and Renzo following in his wake, they both reached the centre of the crowd. Here was a ring round a bonfire, with a heap of live coals, the remains of the things plundered from the bakers. Around the fire they were stamping, and shouting, and sending forth cries of triumph and imprecations.

The man threw his heap upon the fire, and another, with a wooden stake half burnt, stirred it well up; the smoke thickens, flames burst forth again, and with them still louder shouts of exultation. "Abundance, for ever! Death to the monopolizers! no more famine! perish the bakeries! perish the Giunta! bread for ever!"

To be frank, the destruction of bakeries and the ruin of bakers, are not exactly the true way to get "bread for ever," but this is a metaphysical subtlety that rarely gets into the head of a mob. Without being a great metaphysician, a man sometimes finds that out at first, before he has thought much about it, and it is only when he has talked a great deal, or has heard a great deal said about it, that at length he becomes unable to see it. In fact, it occurred to Renzo at first, and occupied his thoughts a good deal; but he kept it to himself: for amongst so many faces, there was not one that seemed to say to him—my friend, if I am in the wrong, set me right, and I shall be obliged to you.

The flame had subsided again, no one was seen approaching with more fuel, and the mob was beginning to be annoyed, when a rumor was spread, that at the Cordusio, (a small square where four streets met not far from there) another bakery was besieged. It often happens, in similar circumstances, that the announcement of a thing produces the thing itself. This rumor produced in the multitude a desire to go there.

"I'll go—will you go? Yes. Let us go then!" was heard in every direction. The assembly moved, and went in that direction. Renzo remained behind, hardly stirring, except when he was dragged along by the torrent; he was counseling with himself, whether he had better get out of this uproar and return to the convent to seek for father Buonaventura, or go and see what would happen next. Curiosity again prevailed, but he determined not to trust himself again in the middle of all this confusion, and get his bones broke or something worse, but to keep at a distance and look on. And having got a little way off, he took another roll from his pocket and began to eat, following the rear of this tumultuous army.

Issuing by a corner street, that led out of the square into the short and narrow one of *Pescheria vecchia*, the mob went from thence by that crooked arch, into the Mercanti square. In passing by the niche, that is cut near half way up the lodge of the edifice then called the college of physicians, there were but few of them who did not give a look at the great statue which was placed there, with its serious, sullen, angry face—and I am not going too far—of Don Philip the second, who, even in the marble, imposed a sort of awe, and who, with outstretched arm, seemed as if he was about to say—I am here, I, you knaves.

That niche, by a curious circumstance, is now empty. About one hundred and sixty years after the period of our story, one day the head of the statue, then there, was changed by some one, the sceptre taken from the hand, a dagger put there, and the name of Marcus Brutus placed on the statue. In this manner it remained perhaps a couple of years; but one morning, some persons who had no great liking for Marcus Brutus, but who had a secret grudge against him, threw a rope round the statue, pulled it down, and committed all sorts of indignities upon it. Mutilated and reduced to a shapeless trunk, they dragged it through the streets, and when they got tired, threw it no one knows where. Who would have predicted this to Andrea Biffi when he sculptured it?

From the Mercanti square, the clamorous crowd entered the small street of Fustagnai,* from whence the people spread themselves into the Cordusio. The moment they entered it, all eyes were turned towards the bakery that had been spoken of. But instead of the numerous friends they expected to find there at work, they only saw a few lingering and hesitating about, at some distance from the shop, which was shut up, and at the windows of which were placed armed people, who made demonstrations of a determination to defend themselves if necessary. Stopping for a while to inform those who were in the rear, and

* Scalini.

* Fustian weavers.

to see what the others would do, a general interrogation began amongst them. During the hesitation and confused noise of this proceeding, an accursed voice was heard from the midst of the crowd, saying, "The house of the Vicario di provisioni is close by, let us go and do ourselves justice and sack it." This was received more like a signal to execute a thing already agreed upon, than the acceptation of a new proposition. "To the vicar's! To the vicar's!" was the only cry that could be distinguished. The mob moved on to the street where the house was, which had been unluckily named.

CHAPTER XIII.

The unhappy vicar was at this moment making an uncomfortable sort of meal, eating without inclination, of a little stale bread, and was waiting in suspense for the storm to subside, far from suspecting it was about to fall so tremendously upon his own head. Some kind individual had in great haste got before it, and reached the house in season to apprise them of the urgent danger. The servants, drawn by the noise to the gate, looked in dismay down the street, in the direction of the approaching tumult. Whilst they were listening to the information just brought, the vanguard of the mob came in sight, and in great haste information was carried to their master. Just as he was deliberating about escaping, and how to get away, another arrived to inform him that he had no longer time to do it. Scarce had the servants time to shut the gate, which having secured by bars and props, they next closed the windows, as people do when a black cloud is approaching, and the hail is expected every instant. The increasing roar of the mob, descending like thunder, filled the empty court yard—every vacant place of the house echoed it back; and amidst this immense and terrible uproar, the noise made by the stones sent against the door, came thicker and louder.

"The vicar! The tyrant! The man that starves the people! We'll have him, dead or alive!"

The miserable man was wandering from room to room, pale, overcome with anguish, beating his hands, recommending himself to God, and to his servants to be firm, and to find out a way for him to escape. But how, and in what way? He mounted up to the garret, and from a hole in the roof looked anxiously into the street, and saw it wedged in with madmen; heard voices crying out for his death, and more dismayed than ever, sought the most secure and concealed place he could find. There hiding himself, he listened if this horrible tumult would subside and abate a little; but perceiving instead of that that the howling became more ferocious and loud, and the thunderings at the door more frequent, his heart failed him altogether, and he stopped his ears as quick as he could. Then as if besides himself, gnashing his teeth, and grinning, he extended his arms, and spread out his hands, as if he would keep the door closed—as to the rest, what he did cannot be known very precisely, because he was alone, and we have nothing left but to guess at it.

Renzo just at this time was in the very thickest of the confusion, not hurried there by the mob, but intentionally there. The proposition he had heard to shed blood, had stirred up all his own: as to the premises being sacked, it was not very clear to him whether it was right or not, but the idea of putting the vicar to death, occasioned in him a complete and instantaneous horror. And although through that fatal docility of a heated mind, increased by the fervid assertion of the many, he was entirely persuaded that the vicar was the immediate cause of the dearth, that he was altogether culpable, yet having, when the mob first put itself in motion, by chance heard a few words from some persons of an earnest intention to endeavor to save the vicar, he immediately conceived the idea of giving his own aid to the same end, and with this intention he had struggled his way through, nigh to the door, that they were battering in various ways. Some with stones were breaking the nails of the lock in order to destroy it; others, with levers, chisels, and hammers, were proceeding more systematically: many with sharp stones, broken knives, nails, and with their hands, were tearing the mortar out of the walls, with a view to get the bricks out, so that they might effect a breach. Those that could not help to do the work, were encouraging the others with their voices, and still pressing on, so as to embarrass the work, that was already sufficiently retarded by the disorderly efforts of the workmen: for God be thanked, what sometimes occurs to good deeds, also happens to bad ones, that the most zealous leaders are the very persons who most retard the work.

The magistrates who were first informed of the tumult, immediately sent for assistance to the commandant of the castle, then called the Castle of Porta Giovia, and he despatched a company of troops. But, betwixt the notice and the order, the collecting of the men, and the marching them off, the soldiers arrived when the house was surrounded with its besiegers, and they were halted at a considerable distance, at the extremity of the crowd. The officer who commanded, did not know what it was best to do. The assemblage was composed of people of both sexes, and of all ages, unarmed and idle. To the intimation which was given them to disperse, and make way, they answered by a deep and continued murmur, but no one moved. To fire upon such a crowd, appeared to the officer not only a cruel proceeding, but one full of danger, as by injuring those least to be dreaded, he would

have still more irritated those who were violent, besides he had no instructions to do so. To open his way into the mob, driving them off to right and left, and pushing on and making war upon those who offered any resistance, would have been the most advisable, but how was he to do it? Who could tell if the soldiers would have been able to move on united, and in order? If, instead of separating the multitude, they themselves had got scattered, they would have been placed at the mercy of the very people they had irritated. This irresolution of the commanding officer, and the immovability of the soldiers, looked, whether it was so or not, like fear. The common populace that were near them, were content with looking them in the face with a sort of "who cares for you?" look; those who were a little further off, did not restrain themselves from making grimaces and sport of them: further off still, few knew they were there, or cared any thing about it. Those who were attacking the house, continued to tear the walls to pieces, without any thought beyond their own enterprize, and those who were looking on, kept encouraging them with their shouts.

Of those conspicuous amongst the rest, was an old man, who had led a disreputable sort of life, staring with his hollow and inflamed eyes wide open, contracting his wrinkles into a diabolical smile of satisfaction, and with his hands raised above the locks, whose hoary whiteness he had dishonored, was waving in the air a hammer, a cord, and four large nails, with which he said he should like to transfix the vicar to the door posts of his own house, as soon as he was dead.

"Oh! shame!" exclaimed Renzo, struck with horror at these words, before many of the rest who seemed to applaud the intention, yet encouraged by observing that some one near him, though silent, showed marks of being equally disgusted with himself: "Shame! what, shall we take the executioner's trade away! murder a Christian! How do you expect God will give us bread, if we commit iniquities of this kind. He will send thunder upon us, and not bread."

"O! you hound! you traitor!" screamed out another of them, who amidst the uproar had heard these holy words, and who turned to Renzo with the look of a demon. "Stop! stop! here is one of the vicar's servants disguised as a countryman, a spy, give it to him! give it to him!" Then a hundred voices arose: "What is it? where is he? who is he? a servant of the vicar's—a spy—the vicar is disguised like a countryman, and is escaping: where is he? where is he? give it to him—give it to him!"

Renzo became silent, stooped down, and wanted to elude their sight: some near him assisted him to conceal himself, and with loud and various cries endeavored to drown their hostile and homicidal voices. But what more effectually served him, was a cry of "room there! room there!" which was now heard. "Make room there! we have got help, room there, hollo!"

What was it? It was a long ladder that some of them were carrying, to set up against the house, in order to enter it by some window. By good luck, however, the means they had adopted to render the matter easy, was not very easy to carry into effect. The bearers at each end, pushed about from every part of the machine, and put out of order by the crowd, were tossed about like waves: one of them with his head between two of the spokes, and the sides on his shoulders, was bellowing as if he had got a yoke about his neck, the other got a violent push, and lost his hold; the ladder went on hitting heads, shoulders, and arms; imagine what they must have said who got all these knocks. Then others raised it up, got under it, and took it on their backs, exclaiming, "come, let us go on." On went the fatal machine, up and down, to the right, aslant, and in every direction. It came just in season to disconcert and throw into disorder the enemies of Renzo, who taking advantage of the confusion, and creeping on all-fours, got away from a place where he was not likely to do very well, and with the intention of getting out of the mob as soon as he could, and going in good earnest to look after, or to wait for, Father Buonaventura.

All at once, a movement commenced at the other end of the crowd, was propagated along; a rumor began to spread itself, and from mouth to mouth, from chorus to chorus, was heard, "Ferrer! Ferrer!" surprize, pleasure, vexation, joy, anger, broke out wherever his name was heard. Some reproach him, some would suffocate him with caresses, some say it is so, some say it is not so, some bless, others curse him.

"Ferrer is here!—it is not true, it is not true! yes, yes, Ferrer for ever! the man that gives us bread cheap.—No, no! he is here, he is here in his carriage. What does he want here?—What has he to do with it? We don't want any one. Ferrer! Ferrer for ever! the friend of the poor. He is come to make the vicar a prisoner—no, no, we will do justice for ourselves: back, back! yes, yes, Ferrer! let Ferrer come! put the vicar in prison!"

And all of them, stretching their necks out, turned towards the quarter where the unexpected arrival was announced, but they saw neither more nor less than they would have seen if they had kept still. Nevertheless, there they were all, standing on tiptoe.

In fact at the extreme end of the crowd, opposite to that where the soldiers were, Antonio Ferrer, the great chancellor, had arrived in his carriage, feeling probably some scruples of conscience, that through his stupidity and obstinacy, he had been the cause of this commotion: he had therefore come to endeavor to appease it, to prevent what would have been both terrible and irreparable, and to make a good use of that popularity he had not acquired in the very best manner.

In popular tumults there is always a certain number of men, who heated by passión, or through fanatic opinions, wicked designs, or an accursed inclination for disorder, do all they can to make the worst of things. They propose or promote the worst of all counsels, and fan the flame whenever it is going down; nothing is ever too much for them, who delight in disorder that has neither method nor end. But by way of counterpoise, there is also another class, perhaps equally ardent, and equally persevering, who exert themselves to produce a contrary effect: some moved by friendship or inclination for the persons threatened, others acting under no other impulse, than that of a pious and natural horror of the shedding of blood, and of the perpetration of atrocious actions. May heaven bless such men. In each of these conflicting classes, even when nothing has been previously concerted, the conformity of inclination, produces an instantaneous agreement in action. What constitutes the mass, and the real material of a mob, is a mixed heap of men, who by undefined gradations, fall, more or less, into one of the extreme parties: some a little fanatic, some a little knavish, some inclined to have justice administered according to their own views; some looking anxiously to see some villany committed, ready for any thing ferocious or merciful, to adore or to execrate, as occasions may present themselves, to experience fully the influence of either one or the other feeling · greedy every moment to know, and to believe any thing however extravagant, impatient to cry out, to applaud, or to condemn.

To pronounce sentence upon, or to idolize a man, are words they take the greatest delight in uttering, and he who has succeeded in persuading them that a man does not deserve to be quartered alive, is under no sort of necessity of wasting his breath to convince them that the same person is worthy of being carried in triumph: they are actors, spectators, tools, impediments, just as the wind blows; ready, too, to be silent, when no one encourages them to make a noise; to desist, when no one instigates them to go on; to disband, when numerous voices say "let us go," and none contradict; and then return home, asking each other, what has been the matter? But as this mass constitutes the main strength, and is indeed the whole strength, so each of the two active parties endeavors by ingenuity to enlist it on its side, as if two adverse principles were contending for the possession of this vast body, in order to move it; applying to those who know best how to spread reports that will excite the passions of the rest, and to give a direction to movements for this or the other purpose; to those who knew how to invent news that can raise or abate indignation, hope or terror; who can set up the cry, that, continuously repeated, expresses, declares, and creates at the same time, the will of the majority in favor of one side or the other.

We have indulged in this gossiping with a view to get an opportunity of saying, that in the contest between the two parties that were trying to get the multitude, now crowded round the vicar's house, on their side, the appearance of Antonio Ferrer gave an almost instantaneous advantage to the humane party, which was evidently the weakest, and which, if this succor had been much delayed, would have had neither the means nor the opportunity of contending. Ferrer was a favorite with the multitude, on account of the tariff he had put on the price of bread, which was his own invention, and which was so favorable to purchasers, as well as for his so heroically holding out against all the arguments which the sellers had addressed to him. Minds thus favorably disposed, were still more captivated by the courageous confidence of the old man, who, without guards, without parade, came thus to find and to front an angry and stormy multitude. The rumor also produced a wonderful effect, that he had come to take the vicar to prison, so that the general rage against him, which would have greatly increased if any one had come to brave them, and to make no concessions, abated a little with this promise of some satisfaction; so that by putting this bone in their mouths, as we say in Milanese, time was given to strengthen those sentiments of an opposite character, which were arising in a great portion of their minds.

The friends of peace, who could now make themselves heard, seconded Ferrer in a hundred ways; those who were near to him, exciting and re-exciting by their own applause, that of the crowd, and making a combined effort to keep the people back, and open a space for the carriage: whilst others were applauding, repeating and circulating his sayings, or such as they deemed advisable to invent for him, blustering with those who were most obstinate and furious, and turning against them the new inclination of the fickle people. "Who is there that won't cry, Ferrer for ever? You did'nt want bread to be cheap, eh? Those are bad men that don't like justice to be done in a Christian way! and some are making a greater clamor than the rest, just to let the vicar escape. To prison with the vicar! Ferrer for ever! make room for Ferrer!" The number of those who talked in this way, increased so much, and the audacity of the contrary party was giving way so fast, that those who began with reasoning, now laid hold of the men that were still trying to destroy the walls, to force them to desist, and to take their tools from them. These, furious, threatened also, and tried to get them back again, but the cause of blood was now lost; the cry that predominated was, to prison—justice—Ferrer!—after some resistance, these men were forced away; the others then took possession of the gate, and to protect it from fresh assaults, and to clear the way for Ferrer, intelligence was conveyed to those in the house, (chinks were not wanting for that purpose) that aid had arrived, and that the vicar must be kept in rea-

diness "to go immediately—to prison—hem—you comprehend!"

"Is he the Ferrer who signs the proclamations?" asked Renzo of one nigh to him, for he remembered the Vidit Ferrer that the doctor had not only pointed out to him at the foot of the one he was reading, but had read it aloud.

"To be sure; he is the great chancellor," was the answer.

"He is a good man; is he not?"

"Yes, indeed, he is more than that! He is the man that put the price of bread so low, and the others would'nt let it remain so, and now he is going to take the vicar to prison, who has not done what he ought to have done."

It is not necessary to say that Renzo was immediately for Ferrer. He wanted directly to go to him. It was not an easy thing to do, but with the aid of a few alpine thrusts with his elbows, he succeeded in forcing his way, and getting amongst the forwardest, right along side of the carriage.

This had advanced some distance into the crowd, and at that precise moment had stopped, owing to the frequent and inevitable hinderances it experienced in a progress of this kind. The old man presented, first at one, then at another side window, a face all humility, complaisance, and benevolence, just such a face as he reserved for those occasions when he had to stand in the presence of Don Philip the Fourth, but he was constrained to use it also upon this occasion. He also spoke, but the noise and confusion of so many voices, the *evvivas* that were put up for himself even, permitted very little of what he said, to reach but few of them. He therefore brought a few gestures forwards, conveying kisses in his drawn up fingers from his lips, and then opening his hands, and distributing them right and left as an acknowledgment of thanks for the public kindness evinced towards him; and moving his hands gently out of the windows, to ask them to make room, and then lowering them politely, as if to request silence for a moment. When he had partially obtained it, those nearest to him who heard what he said, repeated his words to the rest. "Bread—abundance—I come to administer justice—a little room if you please." Overcome and almost stunned with the uproar of so many voices, by the sight of so many faces crowded together, of so many eyes fixed upon him, he threw himself back a moment, puffed out his cheeks, gave a great blow, and said to himself, in Spanish, *Por mi vida, que de gente!**

"Ferrer forever! Don't be afraid! You are an honest man! Bread! bread!"

"Yes, bread, bread!" answered Ferrer, putting his right hand to his heart, "abundance, I promise it to you," then, with a loud voice, "I am come to make a prisoner of him, and to give him the punishment he deserves," adding, "*si esta culpable.*"* Then leaning towards the coachman, he said rapidly, "*adelante, Pedro, si puedes.*"†

The coachman also smiled upon the multitude with an affected graciousness, as if he had been a great personage; and with ineffable politeness, motioned with his whip to the right and to the left, to ask his troublesome neighbors to draw back a little, and keep out of the way. "Do me the favor," said he also, "gentlemen, a little room—just a little—just, just enough to move on."

In the mean time the most active of the friendly party were doing all they could to make that room, which was asked in such very gentle phrases: some who were before the horses made the crowd draw back, by using good words, and by pushing them gently on the breast with their hands, "there! there! a little space, gentlemen." Others were doing the same thing at the sides of the carriage, that it might proceed without going over their feet, or discomposing their mustachios; which, besides hurting their persons, might have endangered the high favor Ferrer now enjoyed.

Renzo, after looking for some moments with pleasure upon his dignified and venerable head, somewhat disturbed by distress, and oppressed with fatigue, but animated with solicitude, and embellished, as it were, with the hope of snatching a fellow-creature from mortal anguish, dismissed all thoughts of going away, and resolved to assist Ferrer, and not to abandon him, but when he had fulfilled his intention. As soon said as done, he immediately went to work with the rest to make room for the carriage, and the aid he gave was certainly not the least effectual: room was made—"Come on," said more than one of them to the coachman, and opening the crowd still before them. "*Adelante, presto, con juicio*"‡ said his master to him, and the carriage moved. Ferrer, amidst the salutations which he dispensed at random upon the crowd, made a few particular ones of thanks, with a smile of intelligence to those who were active in his behalf; and more than one of these came to Renzo's share, who in truth deserved them, for he was of greater service on that day to the grand chancellor, than the bravest of his secretaries could have been. The young mountaineer, charmed with so much graciousness, seemed to himself almost to have formed a friendship with Antonio Ferrer.

The carriage having once got in motion, proceeded on with more or less velocity, and not without occasional short stops. The distance, perhaps, was not greater than a stone's throw; but in proportion to the time employed, it might have appeared no inconsiderable journey, to any one not governed by so high and benevolent a motive as Ferrer was. The people fluctuated before, behind, to the right and to the left of the carriage, like the billows

* By my life, what a number of people.

* If he is guilty. † Drive on, Peter, if you can. ‡ Go on, quick, be careful.

around a vessel driven before the storm. The uproar was still louder and discordant, and more deafening than that of the tempest. Ferrer, looking first to one side, then to another, motioning and gesticulating all the time, endeavored to hear something of what was said, that he might return such answers as the occasion required. He tried, as well as he could, to keep up a little conversation with the party friendly to him, but it was a difficult thing to do; he had, perhaps, not found any thing more difficult during the many years he had been grand chancellor. From time to time, however, a word or two, even a phrase, was heard repeated from some of the groups on his way, but they were like the sound that a squib makes, in comparison with the discharge of an entire piece of fire works.

Endeavoring to answer these expressions in a satisfactory way, and bawling out as loud as he could what he thought would please them most, or such as the immediate necessity of the case seemed to require, he had to talk the whole way.

"Yes, gentlemen, bread, bread, abundance. I'll take him to prison—he shall be punished—*si esta culpable*. Yes, yes, I'll take the command—cheap bread. *Asi es*, that is it, I mean to say. The King our master won't permit these his faithful vassals to suffer for want of bread. *Ox! ox! guardaos*. Take care of yourselves, gentlemen. *Pedro, adelante con juicio*. Abundance! abundance! a little room, for charity's sake. Bread! bread! to prison! to prison! What?" he exclaimed to one of the mob who had thrust half of his person in at the carriage door, to bawl out some advice, or request, or applause or other. But this fellow ere the *what* reached him, was hauled out of the door way by another who saw he was on the point of the wheel going over him. Amidst all these knocks and thumps, amidst these incessant acclamations, amidst an occasional demonstration too of opposition, which broke out here and there, but was soon put down, Ferrer at last reached the house, chiefly through the means of his kind auxiliaries.

The others, who, as we have said, were there with the same good intentions, had in the mean time done all they could to make a little space with prayers, exhortations, threats, treading, kicking here and there, and with that determined intention, and that renewal of strength which springs from seeing the accomplishment of our wishes at hand, they had succeeded in dividing the crowd into two halves, and in keeping them back, so that a sort of space was formed between the gate and the carriage. Renzo who had acted both as a guide and a runner, had arrived with the carriage, and was enabled to place himself in front of one of those friendly ramparts, that served both as wings to protect the carriage, and as banks to restrain the impetuosity of the popular waves. And there assisting to keep up the position with his powerful shoulders, he was at the same time in a situation to see every thing that was going on. Ferrer drew a deep sigh, when he saw a free space and that the gate was shut. Shut here, means not open; as to the rest, the hinges were dragged off the pillars, the door work made into chips, all bruised, and forced in the centre, so that through a broad fissure a part of the bolt could be perceived twisted, bent, and almost pulled out, the only thing that held the doors together almost. One of the friendly party had placed himself at the fissure to tell them to open the door, another went to open the carriage door; the old man put out his head, arose, and laying his right hand on the arm of the man, he put his foot upon the step.

The crowd on both sides stood up as much as they could to see. A thousand faces, a thousand beards were in the air: the general curiosity and attention produced a moment's silence. Ferrer, standing for an instant upon the step, cast a look around, saluted the multitude with a bow, as if it had been from a pulpit, and having put his left hand on his breast, said aloud "bread and justice?" "He is frank, straight forward, and is quite magisterial," was said amongst the acclamations, that were sent up to heaven.

In the mean time those within had opened the gate, or to speak more accurately, had got the bolt off, with the staples that were already hanging down. The gate was opened ajar, to let the desired guest in, taking especial care however to measure the aperture to the precise space necessary for his person. "Quick, quick," said he, "open it more that I may get in; and you, my good fellows, keep the people back; don't let them crowd upon me, for the love of Heaven! keep a little space open for by and by. A single moment, gentlemen," said he to those inside, "gently with that gate, let me get in—oh—my ribs—take care of my ribs, now close it; no, no, stop, stop, my toga, my toga!" And there it would have remained caught in the door, if Ferrer very adroitly had not drawn the tail of it in, which disappeared like the tail of a snake when it follows its master into his den.

As soon as the gate was closed again in the best manner they were able to do, they immediately propped it up in the inside, with posts. Those on the outside who acted as body-guard to Ferrer, with their shoulders, their arms, and with their cries endeavored to keep the space free, praying to God in their hearts that the affair might soon be over.

"Quick, quick," cried out the chancellor, inside under the portico, to the servants who got around him, all out of breath, and exclaiming, "Blessings on you, ah, your excellency! oh, your excellency! ah, your excellency!"

"Quick, quick," repeated Ferrer, "where is this poor good man?" The vicar was descending the stairs, half pulled and half carried by his people, as white as bleached linen. When he saw the aid that had reached him, he drew a great sigh, his pulse returned, life began to stir again within him, and the color to return to his cheeks. He hurried on at the sight of

Ferrer, exclaiming, "I am in the hands of God, and of your excellency, but how shall I get from hence? Every where there are men who seek to kill me."

"*Venga conmigo, usted,** and be of good courage; my carriage is outside—quick, quick." Taking him by the hand he drew him towards the gate, encouraging him by the way, saying in his heart at the same time, *Aqui esta el busillis! Dios nos Valga!* †

The gate being opened, Ferrer went out first, the other followed him, crouching behind, and holding him fast by his protecting toga, as a child clings to the gown of its mother. Those who had kept the space free, now held up their hands, and their hats, and formed a sort of a cloud, as it were, to hide the vicar from the dangerous vision of the multitude, who having first got into the carriage, squatted down in a corner of it. Ferrer entered next, and the door was closed. The mob saw, knew, and divined very well what was going on, and sent out a confused roaring of applauses and imprecations.

That part of the journey which remained to be accomplished, might seem to be the most difficult, and the most dangerous; but the public wish, that the vicar should be taken to prison, had been sufficiently declared, and whilst the carriage had stopped at the gate, many of those who had assisted Ferrer to reach it, had contrived to prepare and preserve a road through the crowd, by which the carriage might a second time proceed, a little more expeditiously, and without stopping any more. As it proceeded on, the people, forming the lane, reunited themselves into a mass again behind it.

The chancellor, scarcely seated, stooped down to caution the vicar to keep himself snug at the bottom, and, for the love of God not to show himself in the least, but there was no occasion for such advice. It was necessary for him, on the contrary, to show himself, in order to draw the attention of the mob entirely to his own person. And during the whole way, as he did at first, he made to his fickle auditors, an harangue, the most uninterrupted as to time, as it was the most unconnected as to sense, that was ever delivered; interlarding it every now and then, with a Spanish word or two, that he hastily dropped into the ear of his companion crouched down near him.

"Yes, gentlemen, bread and justice—to the castle—to prison—under my charge. Thank you, thank you, a thousand thanks! No, no, he shall not escape! *Por ablandarlos*!‡ You are quite right—we will examine—we will see. And I return your kindness, gentlemen. A severe punishment. *Esto lo digo por su bien.*§ A reasonable regulation, an honest regulation, and punishment for those that starve the people, Stand on one side, if you will be so kind. Yes, yes, I am an honest man, a friend to the people. He shall be punished—it is true—he is a scoundrel—a villain. *Perdome usted.** He shall get it—he shall get it—*si esta culpable.* Yes, yes, we'll make these bakers mind what they are about. God bless the king, and the good Milanese, his most faithful vassals. We have him snug—we have him snug. *Animo, estamos ya quasi a fuera.*"†

They had in fact got through the thickest part of the mob, and were on the point of getting entirely free of it, when the chancellor, who was beginning to give a little rest to his lungs, perceived succors after the Pisan fashion,‡ those Spanish soldiers, who however towards the last had not been entirely useless; under the directions, and with the help of some of the citizens, they had assisted in keeping some of the mob quiet, and in clearing the way for the chancellor's retreat. When the carriage reached them, they drew up into a double line, and presented arms to the grand chancellor, who here also bowed right and left, and said to the officer who drew near to salute him, accompanying his words with a motion of his hand, "*Beso a usted las manos:*§ words that the officer understood in the sense that was meant—and which was—a pretty sort of assistance you have given me. The officer saluted him again by way of answer, and shrugged up his shoulders. It was a good opportunity for saying, *Cedant arma togæ*, but Ferrer's mind at that moment was not disposed to quotations, and indeed it would have been so many words thrown to the winds, for the officer did not understand Latin.

Pedro, whilst he was driving through the two files of soldiers, with their muskets so respectfully presented, came to himself again. He shook off the confusion of mind he had been in, remembered who he was, and who he was driving, and without any more ceremonious grimaces to the mob, now at a sufficient distance to be disregarded, he called out to his horses, gave them a crack, and trotted them on towards the castle.

"*Levantese levantese, estamos fuera,*"‖ said Ferrer to the vicar, who feeling somewhat reassured by the cessation of the noise, and by the rapid motion of the carriage, as well as by these words, arose from his uncomfortable position, and having recovered himself a little, began to return his repeated thanks to his deliverer. The chancellor, after condoling with him respecting the danger he had run, and congratulating him on his escape, passed his hand over his own bald crown, and exclaimed, "*Que dira de esto su excellenzia?*"¶ who has trouble enough of his own, with that cursed place that won't surrender! *Que dira el conde*

* Come along with me.
† Now comes the pinch! God help us!
‡ I am saying this to amuse them.
§ I only say this for your good.

* You must excuse me.
† Courage, we are almost out of danger.
‡ When the danger was past.
§ I kiss your hands.
‖ Get up, get up, we are out of the mob.
¶ What will his excellency say of this?

*Duque,** who starts if a leaf makes an unusual noise? *Que dira el rey nuestro Senor,*† who in some way or other is sure to hear something of such a tumult as this? And is it going to end here? *Dios lo sabe.*"‡

"As for me, I will have no more trouble about it," said the vicar, "I wash my hands of it; I resign my post into the hands of your excellency; I'll go and live in some grotto, upon some mountain—I'll become a hermit, far, far from these abominable brutes——."

"You will do that which shall be most convenient *por el servicio de su magestad,*"§ answered the grand chancellor gravely.

"His majesty does not want me to be murdered," replied the vicar; "I'll go to some grotto, to some grotto, far from them all."

What became of this resolution of the vicar, our author does not relate; for, after accompanying the poor man to the castle, he makes no further mention of his affairs.

CHAPTER XIV.

The crowd that remained behind began to disperse, and to move away by one or another of the streets to the right and to the left. Some went home to look after their family affairs, others removed from the place from a desire to roam about where there was more room, after being squeezed up so many hours; some went to seek out their acquaintances, that they might have a talk over the great affairs of the day. The same movements were going on at the other end of the street; where the people were not in sufficient numbers to prevent the company of soldiers from advancing, without a contest, and getting near to the vicar's house. Close to it, however, there still remained the dregs of all this fermentation; a handful of vagabonds, who, dissatisfied that such a prodigious hubbub had come to such a tame and imperfect conclusion, were grumbling, and cursing, and counselling with one another, with a view to mutual encouragement to commence some other undertaking; and as if to try, they still continued bruising and injuring the poor gate, which had been, once more, fastened and barred as well they could. At the arrival of the soldiers, the whole of them with common consent, moved to the other side of the way, leaving the post free to the soldiers, who took possession and established themselves there to guard the house and the street. The streets and the small squares in the neighborhood, had various groups scattered along them; where two or three stopped, others to the number of twenty collected; some went away, others came to them, like those fleecy clouds which occasionally move about and disseminate themselves in the azure sky, after a storm, and which induce people who look at them, to say that the weather is not yet settled. The conversation carried on there was various, confused, and changing; some related with great earnestness the particular incidents they had observed, others what they themselves had done: some expressed their satisfaction that the affair had finished so well, and praised the grand chancellor, predicting at the same time serious results to the vicar; whilst others, laughing at the idea, insisted that nothing would be done to him, observing that wolves don't eat wolves flesh: a few, in a more angry tone, murmured that things had not been done as they ought to have been, that they had been cheated, that it was madness to have made such a noise, and then let themselves be made such fools of.

Meantime the sun had gone down, and all things were gradually becoming of the same color; many of them tired with their day's work, and annoyed at talking in the dark, returned home. Our youth, having aided in the progress of the carriage, as long as assistance was necessary, and having followed it through the files of soldiers, as if in triumph, was glad when he saw it move off, out of all danger. He went along with the crowd a short distance, and turned into the first opening, that he also might feel more at ease. He had gone but a short distance, when, agitated by so many occurrences, so many recent and confused recollections, he felt a great want of food and repose, and began to look out on each side of the street to discover the sign of an inn, since it was now too late to go to the convent of the capuchins. Walking along and looking up as he went, he fell in with a knot of people, and hearing them talk of plans and propositions for the next day, he stopped. Having listened for a moment, he could not resist giving his own opinion, it appearing to him that one who had done so much as himself, might without presumption say something too. And having been led to believe from what he had seen that day, that at present, to carry any thing into execution, nothing more was wanted than to make the people who roamed about the streets, approve it; "My good gentlemen," he began in a tone of exordium, "May I give my own poor opinion too? My poor opinion is this, that it is not about bread alone they are guilty of iniquity, and since to-day it has been clearly seen, that if you make yourselves felt, you will obtain justice; you ought to go on henceforward in the same way, till a remedy has been obtained for all your wrongs, that things may be regulated in a Christian sort of way. Is'nt it true, my good gentlemen, that there is a handful of tyrants, that break the whole ten commandments, and who persecute quiet people that don't think of them, to do them all sorts of injuries, and then are not they always in the

* What will the Count Duke say?
† What will the king our master, say?
‡ God alone knows.
§ For his majesty's service.

right? Nay, when they have done one thing more wicked than the rest, don't they walk with their heads up, as if they ought to be praised for it? I warrant there are such in Milan."

"Too many of them," said a voice.

"That's what I say," answered Renzo, "we have heard of them in the country. Why the thing speaks for itself. Let us now just suppose, that one of these people I mean to speak of, is partly in the country, and partly in Milan; if he is a devil there, he can't be an angel here, it seems to me. Now tell me, my good gentleman, did you ever see one of these men at the confessional.* And what is worse (and this I can most certainly say) is, that there are decrees out and printed, expressly to punish them; not decrees that mean nothing, but good ones, and such as no better can be found. All their villanies are described plainly, just such as they are, and for every one its punishment. And they say—be they whom they may, vile and plebeian, and I don't know what. But if you go to the doctors, and the scribes, and the pharisees, to have justice done you, as the decrees direct, they'll no more listen to you, than the Pope will let a rogue talk to him. It is enough to make an honest man go mad.

"It is clear then that the king and those who have the command, wish bad men to be punished, but nothing is done, because they all league together. The league ought to be broke, and we ought to go to-morrow to Ferrer, who is an honest man, and a complete gentleman: we saw to-day how contented he was to be amongst poor people, and how he tried to hear every thing that was said to him, and how kindly he answered every body. We must go to Ferrer and tell him how things are going on, and for my share I can tell him some famous affairs. I have seen with my own eyes a decree with the king's arms at the top of it as big as that, and it was made by three of of them that have the command, and the name of every one of them was at the bottom, fairly printed, and one of them was Ferrer, I saw it with my own eyes. That decree spoke of things just as they had happened to me, and a doctor whom I asked to have justice done to me, as those three gentlemen had directed, amongst whom Ferrer was there too, this Signor doctor, who had shown me the decree himself, which is the best of it, ah! ah! he listened as if I was a madman talking to him. I am certain that when that dear good old man will hear of such fine doings, and he can't hear of them all—especially those that are done in the country—that he won't let things go on in this way, and that he will find out a good remedy for us. And then, even they, if they make the decrees, they must wish to see them obeyed, for it is a kind of contempt, and nothing more than an epitaph, to put their names to what goes for nothing. And these overbearing great men, if they won't lower their heads, and will still go on like mad, we are here to help Ferrer, as we did to-day. I don't say neither that he ought to go about in his carriage, to haul down stairs all these villanous, overbearing tyrants—no, no—he would want Noah's ark to do that. He must order those whose business it is, not only in Milan, but every where, to have things done as the decrees say, and commence proceedings against all those who have committed any iniquities: and where the decrees say they must go to prison—to prison let them go: and where they say to the galleys—let them go to the galleys. Then the podesta's should be told to do things as they ought to be done, and if they won't, send them about their business, and get others that will; and as I said, we will lend them a hand. The doctors too, should be ordered to listen to poor people, and to speak up for the right. Have I said well, gentlemen?"

Renzo had spoken with so much earnestness, that from the beginning, a great portion of his audience, suspending their conversation, had turned to hear him, and at one moment the whole of them had become listeners. Clamorous applauses of "bravo, to be sure, he is in the right, it is too true," followed his harangue. Critics, however, were not wanted. "It is a great matter to listen to these mountaineers," said one, "they are all lawyers," and went off. "Now," murmured another, "we shall have every ragamuffin turn orator, and in our hurry about putting meat on the fire, we shall forget what we came here for, which was to get cheap bread." Renzo, however, only heard the compliments, first one shook hands with him, and then another. "We shall see each other to-morrow. Where? At the cathedral square. Very well—very well—and something will be done—something will be done."

"Will any one of you kind gentlemen, tell me where there is an inn, where a poor young country fellow can get a mouthful to eat, and lie down?" said Renzo.

"I'll do that my good young man," answered one, who had listened attentively to him, without yet saying a word, "I know an inn that will suit you exactly, and I will recommend you to the landlord, who is a friend of mine, and an honest man."

"Is it here?" asked Renzo.

"A little distance only," answered the other.

The assembly dispersed, and Renzo, after many hearty shakes from unknown hands, went off with his guide, thanking him for his courtesy.

"Not at all, not at all," said he, "one hand can wash the other, and both together can wash the face. Is it not our duty to serve our neighbor?" As they went on, by way of conversation, he first asked one and then another thing of Renzo, "not that I have any curiosity about your affairs, but you seemed tired. What part of the country do you come from?"

"I come," answered Renzo, "all the way from Lecco."

* Col muso alla ferrata.

"All the way from Lecco! are you from Lecco?"

"From Lecco—that is from the district."

"Poor young man! From what I have heard you say, you have been served bad enough by them."

"My dear good honest man! it was necessary for me to use a little caution when I was talking, that I might not expose my own matters in public; but—some day it will be known, and then——. But here is the sign of an inn, and to tell the truth I don't want to go any farther."

"No, no, let us go where I told you; we have not much farther to go," said his guide, "you won't be so well off here."

"Why, as to that," said Renzo, "I am not one of your young gentlemen accustomed to delicacies, something substantial to fortify the stomach a little, and a straw bed, will satisfy me; and what I am most in want of just now, is to get them both as soon as I can. I'll take my chance." And he entered a sort of door-way, with the sign of the full moon hanging over it. "Well, I'll introduce you here, since you wish it," said the unknown, and followed him.

"Don't give yourself any further trouble," answered Renzo. "But," he added, "do me the favor to come in and take a glass with me."

"I will accept your kindness," answered he, and like a man more accustomed to the place, he preceded Renzo through a small court-yard, came to a door with a glass window, lifted the latch, opened it, and entered with his companion into the kitchen.

It was lighted by two lamps, hanging from two poles fastened to the beams of the ceiling. Various persons, differently occupied, were seated at their ease upon benches placed here and there, round a narrow bad table, that extended almost from one end of the room to the other; in some parts of it were napkins and victuals, in others cards with their faces turned all ways, dice were scattered about, and flasks and glasses were every where. Upon the wet boards of the table *Berlinghe, reali,** and *parpagliole*, were circulating, the which, if they had been able to speak, would probably have said—we were this morning in the bakers till, or in the pocket of one of the lookers on in the mob, too much occupied with looking after the public concerns to mind his own. A great clamor was going on. A boy was continually running about, waiting on the table and the men who were gaming. The landlord was seated upon another bench, in the chimney corner, occupied, in appearance, with some figures which he was making in the ashes with the tongs, but in reality, intent upon every thing that was going on. At the lifting of the latch, he arose, and met the new comers. As soon as he perceived the guide—curse on the fellow! said he to himself,—whenever I don't want him, he is sure to come. Casting a rapid glance at Renzo—I don't know who you are, but coming with such a hunter, you must be either a hound or a hare; I shall find out as soon as you begin to talk. No part of this mute soliloquy appeared on the face of the landlord, which was as immovable as that of a picture, and was plump and shining, with a thick reddish beard, and a pair of fixed clear eyes.

"What do you wish gentlemen?" said he

"First of all a good hearty flask of wine,' said Renzo, "and then a mouthful of something or other." Saying this he sat himself down upon a bench towards the extremity of the table, and sent out a sonorous ah! that seemed to say, now for a little comfort after so much fatigue and standing so long. Soon however that table and bench rushed into his memory, where for the last time he had been seated with Lucia and Agnes, and he sighed. He however shook his head as if to drive the thought away, and saw the landlord bringing the wine His companion was seated opposite to him. Renzo poured him out some wine, saying "something to moisten the lips," and having filled the other glass, swallowed it down at a gulp

"What can you give me to eat?" he then said to the landlord.

"Some very good stewed meat?" said he.

"Well, let us have this good stew."

"You shall have it in a moment," said the landlord. "Wait upon this stranger," he called out to the boy and went to the fireside

"But," said he, again coming to Renzo, "we have no bread at this time."

"Providence has provided bread," said Renzo aloud, and laughing, and drawing from his pocket the last of the three small loaves he had picked up at the cross of Saint Dionysius, he lifted it up, calling out, "this is the bread of Providence."

Many of the company turned about at this exclamation, and seeing that trophy in the air, one of them called out, "Cheap bread for ever!"

"Cheap?" said Renzo, "*gratis et amore!*"

"Better still! better still!"

"But," added he, "I do not wish these gentlemen to have any bad thoughts about it. I didn't exactly get this bread dishonestly. I found it on the ground, and if I could find the owner, I should like to give him what he ought to have without any delay."

"Bravo! bravo!" they all cried out, laughing still louder, for there was not one who took the words in the sense they were intended to convey.

"Perhaps you think I am joking, but indeed I am not," said Renzo to his guide, and turning the bread in his hand, he added, "See how it has been knocked about, I don't know what it looks like; but there were more than this, and if any of them were softer than this is, they must cut a strange figure." Upon this he tore several pieces from the loaf, devoured them, and sent after them a second glass of the wine, adding, "It won't go down by itself,

* Livres, rials, and parpagliole, a small coin with the figure of a butterfly.

my throat never was so dry before. What a shouting we have had!"

"Prepare a good bed for this fine young fellow," said his guide, "he intends to sleep here."

"To sleep here," said the landlord, drawing near to the table.

"Certainly," answered Renzo, "a good wholesome bed, let the sheets be clean at any rate, for though I am but a poor man, I am accustomed to cleanliness."

"Oh! as to that!" said the host, and went to a desk in a corner of the kitchen, and returned bringing in his hand an inkstand, with a pen and some paper.

"What does this mean!" said Renzo, swallowing some of the dish which the boy had just placed before him, and smiling, "Is this one of the clean sheets we were talking of?"

Without replying, the landlord laid the paper on the table, the inkstand near it, and placing his left arm on the table, and his right elbow on it likewise, he looked Renzo in the face, holding the pen in his hand, and said, "Do me the favor to tell me your name, your surname, and the place where you live!"

"What?" said Renzo, "why, what has this to do with the bed I was talking about?"

"I do my duty," said the landlord, looking the guide steadily in the face. "We are obliged to give information of every one who comes to lodge with us—the name and surname, the nation he belongs to, what his business is, if he has any arms about him, how long he is going to remain in this city—these are the very words of the decree."

Renzo before he answered, emptied another glass, then a third—I am afraid we shall not be able to count the rest. "Ah! ah!" he then began, "you have a decree! and as I am a doctor of laws, I know exactly what sort of estimation decrees are held in."

"I am in earnest," said the host, always watching the countenance of the guide, who remained mute, and going again to the desk, he came back with a large sheet, a true specimen of a decree, and spread it completely out before the eyes of Renzo.

"Ah! here it is!" he called out, holding up the glass which he had once more filled, and emptying it immediately; then pointing with the other hand to the decree. Here is that holy leaf out of the missal. I am prodigiously glad to see it. I know that coat of arms, I know what that Arian looking sort of a face is, with the collar about its neck." (At the top of the decrees the arms of the Governor were placed in those times; and in those of Don Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, there was a Moorish King with a chain about his neck.)

"That face says, let those command that can, and let those obey that will. When that figure can send Don I know who, to the galleys—that's enough, I know. As another of these pious concerns says, when it shall order, that an honest young man may be married to an honest young woman that is contented to be married to him, then I'll tell that face my name, I'll give it a kiss into the bargain. I may have some good reasons for not telling it my name. A pretty business indeed? a scoundrel, because he has got under him a pack of scoundrels as bad as himself! if he was alone—to be sure—" and here his gesture supplied the rest of the phrase. "If the scoundrel wanted to know where I was, just to do me some bad turn, I want to know if that face would stir to help me. And so I must tell what my business is! something new to be sure! suppose now I am come to Milan, to confess myself, and what then? I make my confessions to a capuchin father, as we say, and not to a landlord." The host said nothing but continued watching the guide's face, who made no sort of demonstration. Renzo, sorry are we to say it, kept swallowing the wine, and went on. "I'll give you a reason, my good landlord, that will make you understand. If the decrees that speak out in favor of good Christians are worth nothing, those that are against them are worth still less. Take all this trumpery away, and bring us another flask instead, this one is gone—it is done for;" saying this he rapped it slightly with his knuckles, and added, "don't you hear how it is cracked?"

Renzo had again attracted the attention of the whole company, and when he had done speaking, a murmur of general approbation arose.

"What must I do?" said the host, still looking at Renzo's unknown friend, not unknown however to him.

"Come, come," a number of voices cried out, "that young countryman is right, these are tricks, and vexations, and plagues! a pack of new laws, new laws!"

Amidst these exclamations, the unknown, looking reproachfully at the landlord for the too open appeal he had made to him, said "let him go on a little his own way, don't raise any dispute here."

"I have done my duty," said the landlord aloud, and added to himself, I have got my shoulders against the wall now at least, and taking the decree, and the writing materials, he gave the empty flask to the boy.

"Bring another of the same kind," said Renzo, "he was a very honest fellow, and we'll put him to sleep just as we did the other, without asking him his name or his surname, or what his business is, or how long he is going to stay in this city."

"Bring the same kind," said the host to the boy, giving him the flask, and resuming his seat at the hearth.—Something worse than a hare!—thought he, poking about in the ashes again. Pretty hands you have fallen into! Jack ass! If you want to drown, drown! but the landlord of the full moon shall get into no scrape on account of your follies.

Renzo returned his thanks to the guide, and to all the others who had taken his part. "My good friends!" said he, "I now clearly see that honest men do stand by and s pport one an-

other." Then waving his open hand over the table, and preparing to play the orator again. "Is not it a wonderful thing," he began, "that those who govern, are always bringing forward, paper, pen, and ink. They keep the pens always going, What a strange passion they have for making use of pens!"

"I say, honest stranger, do you want to know the reason of that?" said one of the gamesters in a laughing way, who was winning.

"Let us hear," answered Renzo.

"The reason is," said he, "that as these gentlemen live upon geese, they have so many pens, that they must use them up some way or other."

The rest, all but the man who was losing, began to laugh at this sally.

"Tut!" said Renzo, "that man's a Poet. You have got poets here to: they spring up every where. I have a touch too, and sometimes I say capital things—but that's when all's going right."

To understand this silly saying of poor Renzo, it must be stated, that amongst the common people of Milan, and still more amongst those of the vicinity, the word poet does not signify as it does with well bred men, a sacred calling, an inhabitant of Pindus, a nursling of the muses; but means a crackbrained whimsical person, who deals more in droll and original sayings than in reasonable propositions; so far has the leveling disposition of the vulgar dared to debase words, and to give a meaning to them so extravagantly far from their original signification. For really I cannot help asking what sort of relation there is between poets and crackbrained whimsical persons?

"I'll tell you the true reason," added Renzo, "it is because they hold the pen themselves, and so their own words that they speak fly away and disappear; but the words that a poor young fellow speaks, they are always watching, and they string them together in a crack with the pen, and then they nail them down on the paper, to make use of them just when it suits them. They have another trick too, when they want to bring a poor young fellow into trouble, who does not understand letters, but who has a little—I know what—" and to convey his meaning, he began tapping his forehead with his forefinger, "and when they find out that he begins to find out what is going on, in a jiffy they begin talking Latin just to make him lose the thread, and to bother him and throw his wits into confusion. That's enough. Some of these practices must be stopped! Every thing to day has been done in the plain way, without paper, or pens, or inkstand; and tomorrow, if the people know how to manage, things will be done better still, without hurting a hair of any ones head however, every thing according to law."

Meantime some of the company had resumed their gaming, some were eating, many were talking aloud, some went away and others arrived. The landlord waited upon them all, but these are matters that have nothing to do with our story. The unknown guide wanted also to go, it seemed as if he had nothing to do there, yet was anxious to have a little more conversation with Renzo before he went. Turning towards him, he began talking about the price of bread again, and after some very trite observations, he brought forward a proposition of his own. "If I had the command," said he, "I would find a way out to make things go right."

"What would you do?" asked Renzo, looking at him with a pair of eyes rather more lively than they ought to have been, and screwing up his mouth, as if particularly attentive. "What would I do?" said he, "I would have plenty of bread for all, as well for the poor as the rich."

"Ah! that's just right," said Renzo.

"This is the true way. There should be an honest regulation by which every one might live. And then, the bread should be apportioned according to the number of persons, for there are greedy people that would have every thing for themselves, getting all they can, helping themselves in such a way that there is nothing left for poor people. The bread, therefore, should be apportioned. And how is it to be done? Why this way. An order should be given to every family, in proportion to the mouths in it, to receive bread at the bakery. For instance, I should have an order in this form.—Deliver to Ambrogio Fusella, sword cutter, having a wife and four children, all able to eat bread—now observe—deliver him so much bread, at such and such a rate. But to do things fairly, always in proportion to the number of mouths. To yourself now, by way of supposition, an order sould be given thus—what is your name?"

"Lorenzo Tramaglino," said the youth, who, pleased with the plan, did not reflect that it was all to be carried on with pen, ink and paper, and that to put it into operation, the first step was to know persons names.

"Very well," said the unknown, "but have you a wife and children?"

"I ought to have had—children, no—too soon for that—but a wife to be sure—if things had gone as they ought to have gone—"

"Ah! you are single! Well have patience. You will then have a smaller portion."

"That's quite right; but if soon, as I hope—and with God's assistance—well, well—but suppose I was to get a wife?"

"Why then your order would be changed, and the portion would be increased. As I said before, always in proportion to the number of mouths," said the unknown, getting up from the bench.

"I like the plan," cried out Renzo, thumping his fist againt the table, "and why don't they pass a law of this kind?"

"How should I know why they don't? Meantime I wish you a good night, for I must go. My wife and chilldren will have been expecting me for sometime."

"A little drop more, another drop," cried Renzo, filling in haste the glass, and getting up, caught hold of the skirts of his doublet, to force him to set down again. "Another drop, don't use me so ill."

But his unknown friend, with a spring, got out of his hands, again said—"good night," and went off, leaving Renzo pouring out all sorts of reproaches, which reached his ears even when he was in the street. Renzo now fell heavily on his bench again, fixed his eyes upon the glass he had filled, and seeing the boy pass by, beckoned to him with his finger to approach; and as if he had something to communicate to him, he pointed to the glass, and in a slow and solemn tone, articulating his words in a very peculiar way, said, "Do you see that? I filled that for that honest man, look at it, it's full to the brim, you see how kind I was, and he would'nt drink it. Sometimes people have queer notions. I can do no more, I have shown what a good heart I have got. And now—that the thing is done, it sha'nt be said that nobody shall drink it." Having said this, he took the glass, and emptied it at once.

"I understand," said the boy going away.

"Oh, you understand, do you?" replied Renzo, "then I must be right; when a man talks as sensibly as I do—"

We stand in need here of all our attachment to truth, to enable us to go on and relate with fidelity, what reflects so little honor upon a personage, who may be esteemed, as it were, the hero of our story. However, in the same spirit of impartiality, we must also state, that this was the very first time that such an occurrence ever happened to Renzo, and indeed it was precisely because he was a stranger to excesses of every kind, that he fell so fatally into this. The few glasses which, contrary to his custom, he had swallowed one after the other—at first, partly to quench his thirst, and partly on account of the excitement he was under, which did not permit him to do any thing with moderation—flew immediately to his head, and produced an effect which an ordinary tippler would not have experienced. Upon which our anonymous writer makes an observation, which we will repeat, let it be worth what it may. Temperate and creditable habits, says he, produce this advantage, that when they have taken root, and are well established in a man, the more certainly, when he commits any excess, is he sure to feel the bad consequences which result from it, and which are sure to last for sometime; so that even his errors are a lesson to him for the future.

Be this as it may, when those first fumes had got into Renzo's head, wine and words were constantly kept going by him, one up and the other down, without any rule or method, and at the point where we left off with him, he was getting on as well as he was able. He felt a great inclination to talk, and as to listeners, or persons present, whom he might choose to consider as listeners, they were not wanting. For a while his words came out pretty fluently, and with some tolerable method, but soon the task of making phrases out of them became a very difficult affair. The thought, that had sprung up fresh and clear to his mind, became obscured and vanished all at once; his words, too, after waiting sometime for them, were quite different from those he had intended them to be. At such moments, led by one of those false instincts which often produce the ruin of men, he had recourse to that blessed friend, the bottle. But how, under such circumstances, it could be of any assistance to him, let any one who knows declare.

We will, however, mention a few of the silly things he said upon this most unfortunate evening; what we shall omit, would be too discreditable, being not only without sense, but also without the least pretension to any meaning, which at least is an essential condition of a printed book.

"Landlord! landlord!" he resumed, following him with his eyes from the table, to the fireside, fixing them sometimes where he was not, and continually talking amidst the noise in the room, "you landlord! I can't swallow that; that matter of the name, surname, and business: to a young fellow like me—you have not acted right. What sort of satisfaction—what good—what pleasure now—to put a poor young fellow down on that paper. Do I say right, gentlemen? Landlords ought to be good fellows. I say, landlord, listen, I want to make a comparison—on account——oh! they laugh, do they? Well, I have drank a little, but I talk good sense. Tell me now. Who is it puts money in your pocket? Is it poor young fellows—am I right? Do these great men that make the decrees, ever come here to wet their mouths?"

"They are all water drinkers," said one near to Renzo.

"They keep sober," said a voice, "that they may tell their lies straight."

"Ah!" said Renzo, "that's the poet that's talking. Then even you understand what I say. Now answer me, landlord—Ferrer, and he's the best of them, has he ever been here to take a glass, or to spend a farthing? And that assassinating dog, Don ——? I say nothing, my head's too much up. Ferrer and father Chrrr——, I know, they are two honest men, but honest men are very scarce. The old men are worse than the young men, and the young men are worse still than the old men. I am glad, however, nobody was killed—let the hangman do that sort of business. Bread—oh! to be sure. I got some thumps, but—I gave a few away too. Make room! abundance for ever! That Ferrer though —— a few latin words—*sies baraos trapolorum*—it's a cursed trick! Justice! bread for ever—these are the right sort of words. We wanted those fellows—when that infernal ton, ton, ton, broke out—yes, ton, ton, ton. I would'nt have run off if they had been with me. We would have fixed the curate—I know what I'm thinking

about." At these words he hung down his head, and remained some time as if he was absorbed in thought, then sent forth a deep sigh, and raised up his countenance with two eyes swimming in tears, and an expression of fondness so ridiculous, and preposterous, that it was well for her, who was the object of it, that she did not see him. But the gross fellows about him, who had began to make a mockery of Renzo's eloquence, carried it still further when they saw his sorrowful face. The nearest said to one another, "look there;" upon which they all turned round, and poor Renzo became the laughing stock of the whole crew. Not that they were all quite sober, but, to speak the truth, no one was so far gone as him, besides he was a countryman. They began, first one, and then the other, to worry him with silly and coarse questions, and with making game of him. Sometimes he seemed disposed to resent it, sometimes he joined in the laugh, again, without minding them, he would talk of something else, sometimes answering, sometimes asking questions. Happily in his folly, he had been instinctively cautious not to mention names, so that that which was most prominently fixed in his mind, was never uttered. Even we should have been exceedingly grieved, if a name, for which we feel some affection and reverence, had been bandied about in their vile mouths, and had become a sport for their infamous tongues

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CHAPTER XV.

The landlord, seeing the game was carrying on too far, and too long, drew near to Renzo, and requesting the others in a gentle way, to leave him alone, shook him by the arm, and endeavored to make him understand, and to persuade him to go to bed. But his tongue was continually harping upon the name and surname, and the decrees, and good young fellows. But the words bed and sleep, repeated in his ear, at last made an impression upon his mind, they awakened in it more distinctly the necessity of that which they signified, and produced a moment of lucid interval. The small portion of understanding that returned to him, was sufficient to make him comprehend that the rest was wanting, just as the last lamp that remains burning in an illumination serves to show that all the others are gone out. He came to a resolution, and spanning his open hands upon the table, tried to get up once or twice, sighed, and at the third trial, assisted by the host, got on his feet. Having got him out from between the table and the bench, and taken up a lamp, the landlord, as well as he could, partly led him, and partly dragged him to the door of the stair case. There Renzo, hearing the salutations that the company were sending after him, turned round in haste, and if his supporter had not been on the alert and held him by the arm, he would have got a severe fall; but turning round with the arm he had at liberty, he began cutting and describing in the air, some salutations by way of return, very much after the fashion of Solomon's knot.

"Come, let us go to bed—to bed," said the landlord, pulling him along, and shutting the door behind them, with great fatigue, he got him up the narrow wooden stairs, and into the bed chamber destined for him. Renzo was glad when he saw his bed, he looked in a stupid loving manner at the landlord with two twinkling eyes that sometimes sparkled more than ever, and sometimes were eclipsed like fire flies: he tried to steady himself upon his legs, and extended his arm towards his host's face, as if he would caress him, as a sign of friendship and gratitude, but was unable to do it. "Bravo, landlord," he however got out, "I see now you are an honest man, this is a good action to give a poor young fellow a bed, but that trick you wanted to put on me, of the name and surname, that was not like an honest man. It was lucky for me that I am up to tricks too."

The landlord, who did not think he was able to correct his ideas so far, and who from long experience knew how men in that state were apt to change their minds on a sudden, wanted to take advantage of that lucid interval to make another attempt. "My dear son," said he, with a caressing voice and countenance, "I did not do that to vex you, nor to know your affairs. What would you have me do? It is the law, and even we are obliged to obey it, otherwise we are the first to be punished. It is better to content them, and—after all what does it amount to? A great matter to be sure! To say a couple of words. Not for them, but to do me a favor. Here, betwixt us two, we can manage our affairs with two pair of eyes, no witnesses; tell me your name, and —and then go to bed with your heart at ease."

"Ah! you rogue you," exclaimed Renzo, "you cheat you! You are coming back upon me again with that old infamous business about names and surnames, and business!"

"Hold your tongue, you monkey, and go to bed," said the host. But he went on louder than ever. "I understand, I am up to you now, you belong to that league too. Stop a little, stop, I'll fix you." And placing his mouth in the direction of the door of the stair case, he began to vociferate, "Hollo! friends, the landlord is one of the——"

"I said so only in fun," said the host to Renzo, trying to get him back to the bed, "only in fun, did'nt you see that I was only in joke?"

"Ah? in fun only, now you talk sense. When you said it only in fun—they are just things to make a joke of." And down he fell on the bed.

"Come—undress yourself, quick," said the landlord, and followed his advice by assisting him, of which there was great need. When

Renzo got his doublet off, the other took it, and felt in the pockets, if his money was there, and there he found it. Believing that his guest on the morrow would have something else to do than to pay him, and that the money would probably fall into hands, whence a landlord could not recover it, he thought he would risk another attempt.

"You are a good young fellow, an honest man, is'nt it true?" said he.

"A good young fellow—an honest man—" replied Renzo, fumbling with his fingers about the buttons of his clothes that he could not get off.

"Well then," said the landlord, "I wish you would pay your little account, for tomorrow morning, I must go out about some affairs of mine——"

"It's quite right," said Renzo," I am up to a thing or two, but I am an honest man. Pay the account? But where shall I go to get the money now?"

"Here it is," said the landlord, and putting all his experience, all his patience, and all his dexterity in play, he at last got his bill paid, and replaced the rest of the money in the pocket.

"Lend me a hand to undress myself, landlord," said Renzo, "I know too—I do—that I am very sleepy."

The host lent him his aid, spread the coverlid over him, and bade him—not in a kind tone, "good night," for he had already begun to snore. Then from that sort of attraction, which leads us to look at an object of dislike, with the same earnestness we do at an object of our love, and which perhaps resolves itself into a desire to know that which operates powerfully upon our minds—he stopped a moment to contemplate the features of his troublesome guest, raising the lamp over his face, and with the palm of his hand making the light fall upon it, just as Psyche is depicted to us, when she is furtively examining the form of her unknown consort. "Silly, crazy fellow!" said he in his mind, to the sleeping youth, "he has really done his best to get into difficulties. Tomorrow thou'lt be able to tell me how thou likest it. A pack of clowns, that want to go round the world, and that don't know in what part of it the sun rises, embroiling themselves and other people too."

Having said or thought this, he lowered the lamp, and left the room, locking the door on the outside. Upon the landing of the staircase, he called to his wife, charging her to leave the children to the care of a young girl they had, and to go down to the kitchen to take care of matters in his place. "I am obliged to go out, about a stranger, whom my bad luck has brought here," said he, and then told her this disagreeable occurrence, adding, "keep an eye every where, and above all things prudence upon such a cursed day as this. There is a pack of dissipated fellows down stairs, that what with drinking, and what they have by nature, are not very nice about the words they use. But enough, if any one of them is rash enough——" "Oh! I am not a child, and I know too what is proper to do. I think till now, no one can say——"

"Well, well, and mind that they pay; and whatever they say about the vicar of provisions, and the governor, and Ferrer, and the decurions, and the cavaliers, and Spain and France and all such nonsense, seem as if you did not understand them, because if you contradict them, you will have a row directly, and if you say they are right, you'll have a worse by and by; and I need not tell thee that sometimes those that say the grossest things—enough; when certain things are uttered, you know its only just turning your head, and saying—coming—as if some one was calling you in a different place. I'll endeavor to get back as soon as I can."

Having said so much, he went down into the kitchen with her, just gave a look to see if there was any novelty going on, took his hat and cloak down from a peg, a stick from a corner, repeated some of the instructions he had given to his wife, and went out. But even whilst he was doing this, he took up again the thread of the apostrophe he had begun at the bed of poor Renzo, and went on with it as he walked along the street.

—That thick headed mountaineer of a fellow—for though Renzo wanted to conceal who he was, yet every thing about him, his phraseology, his pronunciation, his aspect, his manners, announced him to be from the mountains. —When, on such a day as this, by using policy and judgment, I had come off so cleverly, that he must come at the end of it to spoil the grapes in the paniers. Was there no other inn in Milan, that thou must come precisely to mine? If thou had'st at least come alone, I could have shut my eyes for this evening, and tomorrow I could have told thee so. But no, indeed, thou must bring somebody else with thee, and to complete the matter, that somebody must be the bargello.*

At every step, the host met in his way either persons alone, or in pairs or groups, going along whispering. At this point of his mute soliloquy, he saw a patrole of soldiers coming, and standing aside, he looked at them as they went from the corner of his eye, and continued to himself;—there the scourgers go! and that Jack ass because he saw a few people getting up a little uproar, must take it into his head the world was going to be turned inside out. Thou hast laid a fine foundation for thy own ruin, and was't about to ruin me too, which is hardly fair. I did all I could to save thee, and by way of return, thou wanteds't but a little to make a row even at my own house. Thou must now get out of thy own scrape, I shall take care of myself: as if I wanted to know thy name for my own curiosity! of what consequence is it to me whether thy name is Taddeo, or Bartolommeo?

* The police officer.

A pretty idea that I am fond of using pens! but thou art not alone in the world in wanting to have things thy own way. To be sure I know there are decrees that are worth nothing; a fine piece of information for a mountaineer to come and give us. But thou dost not know, thou, that decrees against landlords are good for something? and thou pretendest to go about the world, and to lecture, and dost not know that when a man will have his own way, and does not care a fig about the decrees, the first thing is not to say any ill of them in public. And for a poor landlord who would be of the same way of thinking, and who would'nt ask the name of any man who would give him his custom, dost thou know, thou dolt, what fine things there are in reserve?—under a penalty from any one soever of the said landlords, tavern keepers and others, as before stated, of three hundred crowns.—There they are, all together, three hundred crowns; and now see what a pretty way of spending them—two-thirds of them to be applied to the royal chamber, and the other third to the informer—vastly obliging, indeed—and in case of inability, five years in the galleys, or a greater punishment, pecuniary or corporal, at the pleasure of his excellency.—Prodigiously grateful for his favors!—

At these words, the landlord put his foot on the threshold of the palace of the capitano di justizia. There, as at all the government offices, there was a great stir; in every direction they were issuing such orders as seemed suited for the approaching day, to remove all pretexts that might serve to encourage those who were seeking to get up a new tumult, and to preserve power in the hands of those accustomed to use it. The number of soldiers was increased about the vicar's house, the entrances to the streets were blocked up with beams, and entrenched with carts. The bakers were ordered to continue making bread without intermission, and expresses were despatched to the neighboring districts, with orders to send grain into the city. At every bakery a deputation of noblemen was directed to go early in the morning, to superintend the distribution, and to restrain the unruly by the authority of their presence, and by fair words. But in order to give—to use a common expression, one stroke at the hoop and another at the butt, and to make gentle methods more efficacious by the aid of a little terror, means were considered also how to lay hold of some of the seditious, and this was the affair of the capitano di justizia, who, with one of his organs bathed with vulnerary water, was in such a humor with insurgents and insurrections, as may be well conjectured. His blood-hounds were in the field from the beginning of the uproar, and the pretended Ambrogio Fusella, was, as the landlord has said, a bargello in disguise, sent amongst them to detect some one in the fact, so as to know and keep him in mind, with a view to pounce upon him at night when every thing should be still, or the next day.

Having heard a few words of Renzo's harangue, he made his observations upon him, believing that he was exactly such a person as he was in search of. Finding, however, that he was quite a stranger to the city, he had attempted the master stroke of leading him whilst he was yet excited to the prison, as the best inn in the town, but he failed in this, as we have seen. He was able, however, to carry away a good account of his name, surname and country, besides a thousand conjectural things, so that when the landlord arrived to give information of what he knew about Renzo, they already knew more than himself. He entered the usual room, and made his deposition, how a stranger had come to lodge at his house, who had refused to tell his name.

"You have done your duty in giving us this information," said a criminal notary laying his pen down, "but we already knew it."

"This is a little mysterious," thought he, "this is an extraordinary ability they have."

"We also are acquainted," continued the notary, "with his precious name he is so chary about."

"The devil! his name too, how have they learnt that?" thought he.

"But you," resumed the other with a serious aspect, "you do not inform us of every thing you know."

"What else have I got to tell you?"

"Ah! ah! we are very well acquainted with the fact that this man took to your house a quantity of bread he had stolen, plundered, and acquired by theft and sedition."

"A man comes to my house with a small loaf in his pocket, and I am bound to know how he got it! If I was saying now the very last words before I die, I would swear I never saw more than one small loaf."

"Yes, yes, always excusing, always defending; one who listens to you, must believe they are all honest men. How can you prove he got that loaf honestly"

"What have I to do with proving any thing of the kind? I have nothing to do with it, I am nothing but a landlord."

"You can't, however, deny that this adventurer of yours, had the temerity to utter injurious things against the decrees, and to offer indecent insults to the arms of his Excellency."

"Do me the favor, your worship, to say how he comes to be my adventurer, when this is the first time I have seen him? It is the devil himself, with all respect, that sent him to my house, and if I had known him, your worship understands very well there would have been no necessity of my asking him his name."

"Notwithstanding, in your house, and in your presence, words of fire have been uttered: rash words, seditious propositions, murmurs, complaints, clamors."

"How can your worship suppose that I can pay any attention to the extravagant things that a pack of mad people say, that are all

talking at once. I am a poor man, and am obliged to take care of my own affairs. And your worship knows that those who are pretty free with their tongues, are pretty free also with their hands, especially when they are so many together."

"Yes, yes, you are for letting them go on, and talk and act; tomorrow, tomorrow we shall see if the frolic has got out of their heads. What do you suppose?"

"I suppose nothing."

"That the rabble has got uppermost in Milan!"

"Oh! that is precisely an idea—"

"You will see, you will see."

"I comprehend perfectly well; the king will always be king; he that shall have mutinied, will have mutinied; what should a poor father of a family want to mutiny for; you gentlemen, have force on your side, and it belongs to you to settle the matter."

"Have you a great many people in your house?"

"A world of them."

"And that adventurer of yours, what is he doing? Is he still making an uproar, rousing the people, contriving sedition?"

"That stranger, your worship means, he is gone to bed."

"So you have a great many people in the house—that's sufficient. Take care you don't let him leave you."

"So I have to play the constable, eh?" thought the landlord, without answering yes, or no.

"Go home, and be prudent," resumed the notary.

"I have always acted prudently. Your worship can say whether I have ever stood in the way of justice."

"Well, well! and don't you believe that the law has lost its power."

"I? for the love of Heaven! I don't believe any thing, I mind nothing but my business as a landlord."

"The old song, you have always that in your mouth."

"What else would your worship have me say? truth is but one and the same thing."

"That's enough! at present we will be content with what you have deposed: if it should be necessary, you will give us more minute information of what it may be necessary to ask you."

"What information have I got to give? I know nothing; I have scarce head enough to attend to my own affairs."

"Take care you don't let him go away."

"I hope the illustrious signor capitano will be told that I came immediately to discharge my duty. I kiss your worship's hands."

When day broke, Renzo was still snoring: it was seven o'clock, and the poor fellow was still in a deep sleep, when he was roused by two rough shakes by his arms, and a voice which from the foot of the bed, called out, "Lorenzo Tramaglino." He shook himself, stretched out his arms, opened his eyes with difficulty, and saw standing erect before him at the foot of the bed, a man dressed in black, and two others armed, one to the right and the other to the left of the bolster. What with surprize, his being but half awake, and the headache he had from the wine, he remained a moment as if he was under enchantment; and believing he was a sleep, and not liking his dream, he shook himself that he might get completely awake.

"Have you heard, Lorenzo Tramaglino?" said the man with the black cloak, the notary of the preceding evening—"rouse yourself—get up and come with us."

"Lorenzo Tramaglino!" said Renzo, "What does this mean? What do you want of me? Who has told you my name?"

"None of your chattering, and get up directly," said one the birri*, who stood by him, and who took him by the arm again.

"Hollo! What overbearing ways are these?" cried out Renzo, drawing his arm away. "Landlord! landlord!"

"Shall we take him away in his shirt?" said one of them to the notary.

"Do you hear?" said he to Renzo, "You will be served in this way, if you do not get up directly, and come along with us."

"And what for?" asked Renzo.

"You will learn what for, from the capitano di justizia."

"Me! I am an honest man, I have done nothing, and I am astonished—"

"All the better for you—all the better for you; every thing will be despatched in a couple of words; and you can go about your business."

"Let me go now," said Renzo, "I have nothing to do with justice."

"Come, let us put an end to this!" said one of the birri.

"Shall we carry him?" said the other.

"Lorenzo Tramaglino!" said the notary.

"How does your worship know my name?"

"Do your duty," said the notary to the birri, who immediately laid hold of Renzo to drag him out of the bed.

"Hollo! don't treat an honest man in this way, what—! I know how to dress myself."

"Then put your clothes on, and get up directly," said the notary.

"I am getting up," answered Renzo, and began to collect his clothes that were thrown about upon the bed, like the fragments from a shipwreck on the shore. And putting them on, he continued saying, "but I won't go to the capitano di justizia! I have nothing to do with him! If this affront is to be put so unjustly upon me, I will be taken to Ferrer. I know him, I know he is an honest man, and he is under obligations to me."

"Yes, yes, my son, you shall be taken to Ferrer," answered the notary. Under other circumstances he would have heartily laughed

* Police.

at such a proposition, but this was not a moment to laugh. In coming to the inn, he had perceived in the streets a movement, not easy to define whether it was the remains of a tumult not quite appeased, or the beginning of a new one: a turning out of the burghers, an assembling together, a getting together into knots of the people. And now, without showing it, or trying not to show it, he kept his ears on the alert, and it seemed to him as if the noise was increasing. He was anxious therefore to use despatch, but was desirous also of getting Renzo away by kindness and without resistance; since, if war was declared against him, he was by no means certain that his party when it got into the street, would be three to one, as it was now. He therefore made signs to the birri to be patient, and not to exasperate the youth, whom he endeavored to pacify with kind words. Renzo in the meantime, whilst he was getting on his clothes, bringing to his mind as well as he could, the confused remembrances of the preceding day, came pretty nearly to the conclusion, that the decrees, and the name and surname, must necessarily be the cause of all this trouble, but how the deuce could that man know his name? And what the deuce, too, had happened during that night, that justice had become so confident again, that she dared to lay her hands upon one of the good young fellows, that the day before, had such a powerful vote in the chapter, and who could not all be yet fast a sleep, since he could himself perceive that the rumor in the street kept increasing. And upon looking into the notary's face, he saw manifest signs of an agitation he in vain endeavored to conceal. Therefore, to clear up his conjectures, and to find something or other out, to gain time, and also to execute a plan he was forming, he said, "I comprehend very well the cause of all this, its on account of the name and surname; last night it is true, I was rather merry, these landlords have sometimes wines that are a little treacherous, and every body knows that when wine has gone to the place where words come from, it always wants to talk in its turn. But if it is nothing but that, I am ready now to give you every satisfaction about it. And then, you know my name now; who the deuce told it to you?"

"Bravo, my son, bravo," answered the notary in a friendly tone. "I see that you have got some judgment, and believe me who belong to that trade, that you have more discernment than the rest. It is the best way to get the affair settled. With the good dispositions you have, in two words you will be despatched and set at liberty. But you must understand, my son, that my hands are tied—I can't let you go now if I would. Come, make haste, and keep up your spirits; when they see who you are—and then I will tell them—leave it to me—enough—make haste, my son."

"Ah! your worship can't—I understand," said Renzo, and went on dressing himself, pushing away the birri when they wanted to lay hands on him to hurry him.

"Shall we go by the cathedral square?" he asked of the notary.

"Any road you like, the best way is the shortest, that you may the sooner be set at liberty," answered he, vexed at heart that he could not follow up the mysterious inquiry of Renzo, that was such a fertile theme for interrogatories. I was born unfortunate—thought he—here is a man comes into my hands, who, it is evident, wants nothing better than to tell every thing; and if I now had but a moment, I could *extra formam*, and quite academically, in a sort of friendly dialogue, get every thing out of him without giving him a taste of the rack; a man that I could take to prison completely examined, without his being aware of it; and that such a fellow should come at such a critical conjuncture as this. It can't be helped—thought he—raising up his ears, and bending his head a little backwards—there is no remedy—it may turn out to be a worse day than yesterday. What made him think so, was an extraordinary noise that was heard from the street, so that he could not restrain himself from opening the window and looking out. He perceived it came from a crowd of citizens, who, at the intimation from a patrole of soldiers to disperse, had at first given insolent answers, and finally had separated murmuring and discontented; and what the notary considered as a very deadly sign, was, that the soldiers used great gentleness. Shutting the window, he reflected for a moment whether he should finish his undertaking, or leaving Renzo in the hands of the two birri, should run to the capitano di justizia, to apprize him of this emergency. But—he soon thought—I shall be told that I am a poor weak fool, and that I ought to have executed my orders. We have got up a ball, and now we must dance. Curse on this pressure, and the devil take the trade!

Renzo was on his feet, and the two satellites, one on one side of him, the other on the other, whilst the notary made signs to them not to be too rough, and said to him, "Well done, my son, come make haste."

Renzo too, heard, saw, and was thinking he had now got all his clothes on, except his doublet, which he had in one hand, whilst he was feeling in the pocket with the other. "Ay, ay!" said he, looking significantly at the notary, "there was some money here and a letter, good sir!"

"Every thing shall be punctually given back to you," said the notary, "as soon as the formalities are gone through—let us begone, let us go."

"No, no, no," said Renzo, shaking his head, "this won't satisfy me—I will have my things, my good sir. I will give you an account of my actions, but I will have my property."

"I will prove to you that I trust you—here, and be quick," said the notary, taking from his breast, and giving Renzo, with a sigh, the

things he had missed. Renzo placed them in his pocket, and murmured to himself, "hands off: you are so familiar it seems with thieves, that you have learnt a little of their trade." The birri, at this, were becoming more and more impatient, but the notary winked at them to keep still, saying at the same time to himself, "When once I get you (I know where,) you shall pay for this with usury, you shall pay well for this."

Whilst Renzo put his doublet on, and was taking his hat, the notary made a sign to one of the birri to precede them down stairs, the other he placed behind the prisoner, and himself brought up the rear. When they got into the kitchen, whilst Renzo was saying, "And this blessed landlord, where has he hid himself?" the notary made a sign to the two birri, who, one of them seizing one hand, and the other the other, in great haste slipped over the wrists of the young man, a couple of little machines, which, by a hypocritical figure, are called ruffles. These consisted (and sorry we are to descend to particulars unworthy of historical gravity, but perspicuity requires it) in a small whipcord a little longer than the circumference of an ordinary man's wrist, at each end of which was a short rounded piece of stick. The whipcord went round the prisoner's wrist, and the sticks were drawn between the middle and annular fingers of the man who had him in custody, so that this last, when he shut his fist, and twisted the whipcord, could tighten or slack it at his pleasure: in this way he could not only secure his prisoner, but give him, if he resisted, a taste of martyrdom, the which that it might be more exquisite, the whipcord had a great many knots on it.

Renzo struggled and cried out, "What treachery is this? to an honest man——!" But the notary, who for all sort of bitter things had words of honey, said, "Have patience, they are doing their duty. What would you have? These are nothing but formalities, we can't treat people exactly as we should like to do. If we did not do what we are ordered to do we should be in a pretty situation, a great deal worse than you; have patience!" Whilst he was speaking, the two operators gave the ruffles a twist. Renzo became as quiet as a young horse, when he feels the snaffle for the first time, and called out "Patience!"

"Bravo, my son!" said the notary, this is the true way to get through this affair cleverly. What's to be done? This annoys you; I can comprehend that, but behave well, and in a moment you will be out of this scrape. And, since I see you so well disposed, and feeling an inclination to help you, I will also give you another piece of advice, quite for your good. Trust me, who am accustomed to these things; walk straight forward, without looking round, without making people look at you; if no one looks at you, nobody will know what has happened, and you will save your honor. In an hour from this you will be at liberty, there is so much to do that even they will make haste to despatch you, and then I will put in a word. You can then go about your affairs, and nobody will know you have been in the hands of justice. "And you," he continued, turning to the two birri with a severe countenance, "you, take care you do not hurt him, I take him under my protection; you must do your duty it is true, but remember this is an honest man, a civil youth, who in a short time will be at liberty, and that his honor is of consequence to him. Let nothing appear, but go along just as if you were three honest men taking a walk." And with an imperative tone, and a frowning look, he concluded, "Do you understand me?" Then turning to Renzo with a face all gentleness, and made up into smiles, as much as to say, "We you know are friends!" He whispered to him again, "Be prudent, do as I tell you, don't look about you, trust to me who wish you no harm. Let us go." And the escort now got into motion.

Renzo, however, believed in none of these fair words, nor that either the notary or the birri had any friendly intentions to him; nor had he the least confidence in the prodigious interest that was shown about his reputation, or in the intention that was expressed to aid him; he did not believe a word of all this. But he comprehended exceedingly well, that his pretended friend, fearing lest in the way some good opportunity of slipping out of his hands, might occur, had invented those fine things to prevent his being aware of it, and from taking any advantage of it. So that all these exhortations served to no purpose but to determine Renzo to do what he had already proposed to himself, which was quite the contrary.

No one must conclude, however, from this, that the notary was an inexperienced hand, or a novice in these affairs. He was a regularly trained knave, our historian asserts, who seems to have been one of his friends; but at this particular juncture his mind seems to have been a little agitated. If he had been quite himself, I can tell you he would have made a joke of any one, who to induce another to do what looked suspicious, would have set about suggesting and inculcating it zealously, with the miserable pretence of giving him friendly and disinterested advice. But there is a general tendency in men when they are in straights and are agitated, and perceive what others could do to get them out of their difficulties, to urge them to do it by the most pressing instances and with all sort of pretexts; and rogues, when they are in similar critical situations fall also under the general law. Hence it is, that in similar circumstances, for the greater part they cut a very poor figure. Those masterly turns, those refined contrivances, with which they are accustomed to prevail, which to them are become almost a second nature, which conducted with the necessary serenity and tranquillity of mind, and put in operation in season, and which, after they have succeeded, and become known, meet with universal applause, are,

when they are in straights, managed by the poor devils in a hurried tumultuous way, and without either address or neatness. So that a third person who observes how wretchedly they bring forward their contrivances at such times, can't help pitying and laughing at them; and the very men whom they pretend to manage, although less adroit than themselves, perceive the game they are playing, and receive lessons from the very artifices used against themselves. For this reason one can never enough caution rogues by profession, to keep themselves cool, or what is better, never to get into difficult contingencies.

Renzo, therefore, when they were scarce in the street, began to throw his eyes about here and there, to make himself conspicuous, to thrust his head forward, and listen to what was going on. There was, however, no extraordinary concourse, and although in the face of more than one passenger, one might distinctly read something seditious, still every one kept his road straight on, and as to open sedition there was none at all.

"Judgment! discretion!" murmured the notary behind him, "Your honor, your honor, my son." But when Renzo endeavoring to catch the voices of three persons who were approaching them, with their faces quite red, and heard them speak of a bakery, of flour hidden away, and of the law, he began also to make signs to them with his features, and to cough in a way rather different from one who has taken cold. The men looked more attentively at the escort and stopped; others who were coming in the same direction stopped also; some even who had passed them, having turned round at the whispering, went back and joined them.

"Look to yourself, judgment my son, the worse for you, do you see; don't spoil your own affairs, your honor, your reputation," whispered the notary. Renzo however made matters worse. The birri, after looking at each other a moment, thinking they were doing well, (every one is subject to mistake) gave him a twist with the ruffles.

"Oy, oy, oy," screamed out the young fellow. At this cry, the people gathered together, coming from every part of the street. The escort now was completely stopped. "This is a bad fellow," said the notary to those near him, "he is a thief taken in the fact; draw back and give way to the officers of justice." But Renzo seeing how things were, and that the birri had turned pale, and were at last dismayed, thought—if I don't help myself now, it will all the worse for me. And immediately he raised his voice, "My lads, they have arrested me, because yesterday I cried out, "Bread and justice. I have done nothing, I am an honest man, help me, don't abandon me, my lads."

A favorable murmur, and encouraging shouts were raised in reply. At first the birri commanded, then requested, then prayed the men nearest to them, to move away, and to let them pass, but the crowd continued to increase, and to press upon them still more. Seeing the bad way they were in, they left hold of their ruffles, and thought of nothing but mixing themselves in the crowd, to get off unobserved. The notary was greatly desirous of doing the same thing, but the black cloak he had on, brought him into difficulties. The poor man, pallid in the face, and dismayed at heart, endeavored to make himself small, and twisted himself, in order to slip out of the crowd, but he could not raise his eyes without seeing twenty of them upon him. He tried every scheme to appear as if he was a stranger, who passing that way by chance, had got enclosed in the middle of the crowd, as a straw gets into a block of ice, and meeting the looks of one of them who stared at him with an expression worse than the others, he, having drawn up his mouth into a smile, with a silly sort of expression, asked him, "what is all this mob about?"

"An old crow!" answered the man, "an old crow! an old crow!" was re-echoed by the rest. To these shouts, pushes were added, so that in a short time, partly with his own limbs, and partly with the aid of their elbows, he obtained what he was most anxious about just at that moment, an opportunity of getting out of this terrible squeeze.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Run, run, young man, there is a convent there, yonder is a church, here, there," was called out to Renzo on all sides. As to running off, he was in need of very little of that kind of advice. From the first moment he had encouraged any hope of getting out of their claws, he had thought about this, and made up his mind, if he could get clear of them, to be off without stopping, not only until he was out of the city, but out of the Dutchy. For he had reflected,—they have got my name on their books, how the devil soever it got there; and with my name and surname they can come and take me whenever they choose—as to an asylum, he did not wish to avail himself of it but in an extreme case. For, he reflected, if it is in my power to remain a bird of the forest, I won't go and make a bird in a cage of myself. He thought, therefore, of taking refuge in that town in the territory of Bergamo, where his cousin Bartolo was established, whom, it may be remembered, had often invited him to go there. But how was he to find the road? Left in an unknown part of a city itself unknown to him, Renzo did not even know by what gate the road to Bergamo went, and even if he had known that, he did not know where the gate was. He hesitated a moment about asking directions from the men to whom he owed his liberty, but as in the few moments he had had to meditate about his own affairs

some strange thoughts were busy in his head about the sword-cutter, the father of four children, that was so prodigiously obliging, he thought it best not to let out his intentions to such a numerous assembly, where there might be another of the same stamp, and immediately determined to get off to a distance from the city, and to find out the road as he was going, from somebody or other, who did not know who he was, or why he asked it. He therefore said to his deliverers, "thank you, thank you, my lads, God bless you," and pushing through the space that was immediately made for him, lifted up his heels, and was off. Away he went through this lane, down that street, as hard as he could for a while, without knowing what direction he was going in. As soon as he thought he had got to a reasonable distance, he slackened his pace, that he might not excite suspicion, and began to look round, for some face or other that should inspire him with confidence enough to make the inquiry he wished. But even here there was a difficulty. It was a suspicious question to put, he was pressed by time; the birri, as soon as they were fairly extricated from the awkward position they had got into, would without doubt put themselves upon the track of the fugitive; the report of his rescue and flight might even have got as far as this; in this strait Renzo had to make up his judgment at least a dozen times, before he met with a face that exactly suited his notions. That jolly fat looking man there, who was standing bolt up at his shop door, with his stout legs, and his arms behind his back, his paunch sticking out, holding his chin up with its monstrous dewlap hanging from it, and who from sheer idleness was alternately raising his quivering mass on the points of his feet, and then letting it come down again upon his heels, had a sort of a curious gossiping look, that was more prone to ask questions than to answer them.

This other man who was approaching him with abstracted eyes, and his lip hanging down, far from promising to be able to direct another on his way, scarcely seemed to know how to find his own. That boy there, who to tell the truth, appeared to be alert enough, had still something mischievous in his look, and probably would have indulged some mad humor, and directed a poor countryman the very opposite way to that he wanted to travel. So true it is that when a man is involved in a difficulty, every thing that occurs to him, seems to be a new one! Having cast a glance at one who was coming on in haste, he concluded, that having probably some pressing business on hand, he would give him an immediate and direct answer in order to get rid of him, and perceiving that he was talking to himself, he conceived that he must be a good sort of man. He went up to him, therefore, and said, "Be so kind sir, as to tell me by what gate the road to Bergamo goes?"

"The road to Bergamo? by the oriental gate."

"Thank you sir! and which is the way to the oriental gate?"

"Take that left hand street, it will bring you to the cathedral square;—then—"

"That's enough, sir! I know the rest of the way, and I hope God will return your kindness." On he went by the street that had been pointed out to him. The man looked after him a moment, and turning in his mind the question that had been put to him, and that style of walking in a city, said to himself—either he has given it to somebody, or somebody wants to give it to him.—

Renzo reached the square, crossed it, passed by a heap of ashes and dead embers, and recognized the remains of the bonfire he had seen the day before; passing the cathedral steps, he saw the bakery Delle-grucce half demolished, guarded by soldiers, and went on: at last by the street that he had before come through with the crowd, he came to the convent of the capuchins; he looked at the little square and the door of the church, and said to himself sighing, that friar, though, gave me good advice yesterday, when he told me to go into the church, and to do a little good for myself.

Here having stopped a moment to make some observations about the gate he was to pass through, and seeing, although at some distance, a considerable guard about it, and having his head full of fancies, (he is to pitied, for he had cause enough for them,) he felt a reluctance to attempt that passage. Here at hand was a place of asylum to which he was well recommended by letter, and was strongly tempted to enter it. But regaining courage, he thought—a bird of the woods, as long as I can be so. Who knows me? Certainly the birri can't be watching for me at all the gates. He looked back to see if any one was coming in that direction, and saw nobody, neither did any body appear to take any notice of him. He therefore, proceeded, and brought his legs that were still in the inclination to run, to a walk, and in a quiet sort of way, whistling as he went, reached the gate. Just in the gateway, there was a heap of toll-gatherers, and by way of reinforcement a company of Spanish soldiers; but they were all placed fronting the suburbs, to prevent the entrace of all those who at the report of the riot, should fly to it, as crows do to a field where a battle has taken place; so that Renzo, trying to look as simple as he could, with his eyes on the ground, and a quiet sort of gait, passed the gate-way without any one speaking to him, though his heart was beating the whole time. Seeing a lane to the right, he took that to avoid the main road, and went on for a while without even looking behind him.

Following the lane, he passed by farms and villages, and advanced without asking the names of any of them: he was certain he was leaving Milan behind, and was in hopes he was drawing nigher to Bergamo, that was quite enough for him at present. Sometimes

he looked back, and occasionally rubbed his wrists that still pained him, and had a red mark round them, the remains of the whip cord. His thoughts were, as any one may imagine, a confused mass of repentances, regrets, vexations, and tenderness, it was a fatiguing study to remember all he had done and said the preceding evening to discover the secret part of his sorrowful history, and to imagine how they could possibly have learnt his name. His suspicions naturally fell upon the sword cutter, to whom, he well remembered he had told it. And going over the manner in which he had got it from him, the whole of his conduct, and his propositions, which always ended by wanting to know something, his suspicions were turned into certainty, although he had a glimmering sort of recollection, that after the sword cutter went away he had still kept on talking, but who with, and what it was about, his memory, however he taxed it, could tell nothing at all; all it could tell him was, that at that particular time, it was not at home, The poor young fellow got lost in these speculations, he was like a man that had signed his name to a great many blanks, and who trusting them to another in whom he had confided, had discovered that he was a complete bungler; how is he to find out the state of his affairs, when the whole is a chaos. Another painful study was how to form for the future, some plan not altogether visionary, or altogether unpleasant.

What soon become a harder matter than all the rest, was how to find the road. Having gone for a while at random, he felt the necessity of making some inquiry. He was loath to pronounce the word Bergamo, as if there was something suspicious about it, but it was necessary to do so. He determined, therefore, as he had before done in Milan, to ask some directions from the first traveler he met with, whose physiognomy he liked and he did so.

"You are out of the road," answered the man, and having thought a little, partly by words and partly by gestures, he directed him how to proceed until he had regained the main road. Renzo thanked him, pretended to follow his advice, and indeed took the direction he had received, with the intention of getting near the main road, of not losing sight of it, of going on a parallel course with it, as well as he possibly could, but of having nothing else to do with it. The plan was easier to devise than to execute. The fact was, that going from right to left, as a fish does through the water, following the indications he obtained on the road a little, correcting his course by his own notions and wishes, and following the direction of the various roads he had got into, our fugitive had traveled perhaps twelve miles, when he had left Milan only six behind, and as to Bergamo, he was in luck if he was not farther off it than ever. He began to comprehend that at that rate he would never get to the end of his journey, and must hit upon some other expedient. One that presented itself to him was to find out the name of some place near the confines of the Dutchy, which might be reached by some neighboring road, and making inquiries about that, he could get some directions without dropping any thing on the way about Bergamo, a name which seemed to him to smell of evasion, of running away, and of every thing that was criminal.

Whilst he was thinking how he could fish all this out without occasioning suspicion, he saw a bough* hanging from a lone house at the end of a small settlement: he had for sometime felt as if he was desirous of restoring his strength, and thinking this would be a good place to accomplish both his ends, he went in. He found nobody there but an old woman with her distaff and spindle in her hand, and asking her for something to eat, she offered him some stracchino,† and some good wine. The wine he declined, (the frolic of the preceding evening had taken his relish away for that) but the cheese he accepted, and sat down requesting the old woman to bring it directly. This she did, and immediately poured out a shower of questions on him, who he was, and about the great doings at Milan, the report of which had reached that place. Renzo, not only had address to give the go by to her questions, but taking advantage even of the difficulty, made the old woman's curiosity useful to him, when she asked him where he was going.

"I have to go to a great many places, he answered, and if I can find a moment to spare, I should like to go for a short time, to that town there, a tolerably large one, upon the road to Bergamo, near the confines, that is the confines of Milan—What is the name of it?" There must be some town or other thereabouts—thought he to himself.

"You mean Gorgonzola," replied the old woman.

"Gorgonzola!" repeated Renzo, as if to impress the word better upon his memory. "Is it far from here?" he continued.

"I don't know exactly; perhaps ten, perhaps twelve miles, if one of my sons was here, he could tell you."

"And do you think one could get there by these comfortable by-roads, without taking the highway, really there is so much dust there, it is so long since it has rained."

"I suppose you can, you can ask at the first village you fall in with on the right hand road." And she told him the name of the place.

"It's all right," said Renzo, and getting up, and taking in his hand a piece of bread left from his meagre repast, of a quality very different from that which he had found the day before at the foot of the cross of Saint Dionysius, he paid his bill, left the house, and took

* Little road taverns have a bough out for a sign, this is a very ancient custom: "good wine needs no bush," alludes to this practice. [Translator.]

† Country cheese.

the right hand road. With the name of Gorgonzola in his mouth, from place to place, he made such good use of his time, that he reached it about an hour before sunset.

He bad made up his mind on the road, to make another stop there, and to make a somewhat more substantial meal. His legs too would have liked to go to bed awhile, but before he would have consented to this, Renzo would have let them drop off on the way. His intention was to get information at the inn of the distance from the Adda, to find out in a dexterous way some cross road that led there, and to start again as soon as he had refreshed himself. Born and brought up at the second source, so to speak, of that river, he had often heard say, that at a particular point, and for some distance, it separated the Milanese and Venetian territories: be had not a very precise idea of the situation of these points, but the first thing in his mind just now was to get beyond the river. If he could not succeed in doing it this day, he had determined to walk as long as there was sufficient light to get along with, and sufficient strength left in his limbs, and then to wait for the dawn of day, in some field, or any solitary place, or wherever it might please God, provided always it was not an inn.

Having walked a few paces in Gorgonzola, he saw a sign, entered, and told the landlord who advanced to meet him, to get him a morsel of something to eat and a small measure of wine, for the additional miles, and the time that had passed over had abated the disgust he had felt at first for wine. "Let me have them as quick as you can," added he, "for I want to go on directly." This he said, not only because it was true, but also because he was under apprehensions, lest the landlord, supposing that he wanted to lodge there, might take into his head to ask him about bis name and surname, whence he came, what his business was —he had had enough of that!

The landlord told Renzo he should be served directly, so he sat down at the lower end of tbe table, near the door, the place where timid people always go.

There were in the room, some idle country people, who after having discussed, and disputed, and commented upon the great news from Milan of the preceding day, were worrying themselves to find out how things had gone on this day, so much tbe more, that tbe first intelligence had irritated their curiosity more tban satisfied it; it was an insurrection tbat had been neither subdued, nor had been victorious, suspended rather than terminated, by nigbt, an imperfect sort of thing, the end of an act rather than a drama. One of them left the others, and drawing nigh to the new comer, asked him if he came from Milan.

"Me?" said Renzo, seemingly surprized, in order to gain time to answer.

"You, if its fair to ask."

Renzo, moving his head, drawing up his lips, and letting some inarticulate sounds issue from them, said, "Milan, from what I have heard said—here and there, is not a place to go to at present, unless, indeed, a man's business is very urgent."

"The row then is kept up still to day?" the man still more eagerly inquired.

"To know that one ought to be there," said Renzo.

"But you come from Milan, don't you?"

"I come from Liscate," answered the youth immediately, for he had thought about wbat answer he would give. In the strict sense of the term he had come from there, for he had passed through it, and had learnt the name of the place at a part of the road, from a traveler who had told him it was the first place he would go througb before he reached Gorgonzola.

"Ah!" said the man, with a tone of voice that seemed to say,—I wisb you had come from Milan, but patience.—"And at Liscate," he added, "were there no news from Milan?"

"It is very likely that somebody migbt know something," replied our mountaineer, "but I heard nothing whatever." These words he uttered in that particular sort of way, that means, I know nothing more about it. The man went back to his company, and a moment after the landlord came to set out the refreshment.

"How far is it from here to the Adda?" said Renzo to him in an under tone, with a sleepy sort of yawn, and an indifferent air, such as we have seen him put on before.

"To the Adda, to cross it?" said the landlord.

"That is—yes—to the Adda?"

"Do you want to pass by the bridge of Cassano, or by the ferry of Canonica?"

"Any how—I ask merely for curiosity."

"I mention them, because these are the places where honest men pass—those tbat can give a good account of themselves."

"Yes, I understand; and how far is it?"

"Why you may say, as well for one, as for the other, a little more or less, about six miles."

"Six miles! I did not know," said Renzo. And continuing with a careless indifference that amounted quite to affectation, "I suppose, for any one who wanted to take a shorter cut, there are other places to pass."

"Certainly there are," replied the landlord, fixing a pair of eyes on him full of mischievous curiosity. This was enough to induce the youth to suppress the other inquiries that he had quite prepared. Drawing his plate towards him, and looking at the wine which was on the table, he said, "Is this wine quite genuine?"

"As true as gold," said the landlord, "ask any man here all tbe country round, who understands it, and you will hear." Having said this, he joined the other people.

"Curse on these landlords," said Renzo in his heart, "the more I know, the worse I find them." He however began to eat with a good appetite, listening, however, without appearing to do so, to find out something of what was thought there about the great event in which

he had taken no small part, and especially to observe if amongst the talkers there was not some honest fellow, whom he might so far trust as to ask the way, without apprehension of being too closely questioned, and forced to talk about his own affairs.

"But," said one of them, "this time it really seems as if the people of Milan were in earnest. Well, tomorrow at farthest we shall hear something."

"I am sorry I did not go to Milan this morning," said another.

"If you go tomorrow, I'll go too," said several of them.

"What I want to know," answered the first, "is, whether these great folks in Milan will think of poor people in the country, or no; or whether they will make good laws for themselves only. You know what sort of folks they are, eh? Proud citizens, all for themselves, as if country people were not Christians."

"We've got mouths as well as they have, both to eat, and to stand up for our rights," said another, in a somewhat modest tone, as the proposition was rather in advance, "and when the matter has got ahead, so——"

"There is no grain hidden away, not even in Milan," began another with a dark and mischievous face, when the noise of a horse approaching was heard. All ran to the door, and having got a sight of the person who was coming, went to meet him. It was a Milanese tradesman, who, being in the habit of going more than once a year to Bergamo about his business, was accustomed to pass the night at that inn, and as he generally found the same company there, he was known to them all. They crowded round him, one took hold of the bridle, another the stirrup. "Welcome!"

"I am glad to see you."

"Have you had a good journey?"

"Excellent, and you, how are you all?"

"All well. What are the news from Milan?"

"Ah! you want some news," said the tradesman, dismounting and giving his horse to a boy. "But," continued he, entering the house with the rest of the company, "at this hour you perhaps know them better than myself."

"Indeed we know nothing at all," said more than one, putting their hands on their breasts.

"Is it possible?" said the tradesman, "then you will hear some famous ones, or some very bad ones. Landlord, my old bed, is it unoccupied? Very well, a glass of wine, and my usual mouthful—directly, for I wish to go to bed early, that I may get off soon in the morning and reach Bergamo by dinner. And you, all of you," he continued, seating himself at the end of the table opposite to that where Renzo sat, silent and attentive, "you, haven't you heard all the strange things that took place yesterday?"

"We have heard something about yesterday's work."

"See now, whether you have heard the news or no. I was going to say, that being all day on the watch here, picking up something from every body that passes——"

"But to-day, what took place to-day?"

"Ah! to-day, haven't you heard any thing about to-day?"

"Nothing at all: no one has passed."

"Then let me moisten my lips, and I will tell you what has taken place to-day, you shall hear." He filled the glass, took it in his right hand, then with the two first fingers of the other hand raised his mustachios, stroked his beard, drank, and went on. "Today my friends, little was wanting to make it as rough as yesterday was, or worse. And I can hardly believe I am here to tell you about it, for I had given up all thoughts of the journey, in order to stay at home and protect my little shop."

"What took place?" asked one of the listeners.

"What took place? You shall hear. And cutting the victuals that were on his plate, and beginning to eat, he continued his narration. The company, standing round him at each side of the table, listened to him with their mouths wide open. Renzo, at the lower end, without appearing as if he was interested in the story, attended to what he was saying, perhaps more than the others, finishing slowly the remains of his meal.

"This morning, then, those rascals that created such a horrid uproar yesterday, met at the place they had agreed on—intelligence was obtained of this, and every thing prepared—and gathered together again, and set the old story in circulation from street to street, screaming out in order to get a mob together. You know what takes place, when, with reverence I say it, the house is swept; the heap of dirt keeps increasing as the work goes on. As soon as they thought the crowd was great enough, they rushed on to the house of the vicario di provisioni, as if their tyrannical conduct of yesterday was not enough. A man of such high character! what scoundrels! and such things as they said against him! all of them inventions, an excellent, punctual gentleman. I can say that, for I do business for him, he gets all his livery clothes from me. On they went then towards his house—if you had only seen them—such vagabonds—such faces. Only imagine to yourself, they passed before my shop—such a set of physiognomies—they beat the Jews of the Via Crucis all hollow. And the words that came out of their mouths! just words to stop one's ears against, if it was'nt for fear of being observed. They went there with the fine intention of sacking the house, but—" and here spreading out his left hand in the air, he put the end of his thumb on the point of his nose.

"But?" cried out at once all the listeners.

"But?" continued the tradesman, "they found the streets blocked up with timbers and carts, and behind this barricade a regular file

of soldiers, with their harquebusses leveled, and the locks against their mustachio's. When they saw this ceremony,—what would you all have done in such a case?"

"Turned back."

"To be sure, and that's just what they did. But just see now, if it wasn't the devil himself that was in them. There they are in the Cordusio square, in sight of the bakery, that yesterday they wanted to sack, and what were they doing in the shop? Why they were distributing bread to those that came. There were several cavaliers there, and the very flower of them, seeing that every thing was done in good order, and this mob—I tell you they had the devil in them, and there was not wanting somebody who was putting them up to it,—this mob rushes furiously into the bakery,—you take this, I'll take that—in the twinkling of an eye, cavaliers, bakers, the counter, benches, bags, kneading troughs, bran, flour, paste, all one a top o' t'other."

"And the soldiers?"

"The soldiers had the vicar's house to take care of, one can't sing and carry the cross at the same time. In the twinkling of an eye, I tell you, whatever was good for any thing was whipped off: and then they must have their farce of yesterday played over again, carrying all the wrecks to the square, and making a bonfire, and the villains were already beginning to drag the things out, when one of them, a greater scoundrel than the rest, now what sort of a proposition d'ye think he made?"

"What?"

"What? why to pile up a heap in the shop itself, and set fire to the heap and the house at the same time. Said and done—"

"Did they set fire to it?"

"Stop a while, an excellent man of the neighborhood had an inspiration from heaven. He ran up stairs, looked for a crucifix, found it, hung it out of the bow of a window, took from the head of a bed two holy candles, lit them, and fixed them to the right and left of the cross, on the window sill. The people looked up. In such a place as Milan, and it is right to state it, there is yet a little fear of God left. They came to themselves, the greatest part of them! There were, it is true, some devils there, that for the sake of plunder would have set fire to Paradise, but perceiving the rest were not of their opinion, they had to keep quiet. Then all the dignitaries of the cathedral went into procession, with the cross lifted up, in their choral dresses; and Monsignor the archpriest began to intreat on one side, and Monsignor the Penitentiary on the other, and others in other places—but, my good people, what would you do now? is this an example to set to your children? go home, you shall have bread cheap; just go and look, you will see the price fixed at the corners of the streets."

"Was it so?"

"How! if it was so? do you think the dignitaries of the cathedral would come out in their robes just to tell a pack of idle tales?"

"And what did the people do?"

"By degrees they dispersed, they went to the corners, and those who knew how to read, found it was exactly so. What do you think of bread weighing eight ounces being fixed at a soldo?"

"What capital luck!"

"It looks well, if it only lasts. Do you know how much flour they have wasted between yesterday and this morning? As much as would have lasted the Dutchy two months."

"And in favor of us in the country, have they made no regulations?"

"What they have done in Milan, is at the expense of the city. I don't know what to say about that, you'll have such luck as it pleases God to give you. Any how the riots are over, but I have not told you all, here is the best of it."

"What, has any thing else happened?"

"Last night or this morning, I don't know which, they took up a great many leaders, and we heard immediately afterwards that four of them were to be hanged. As soon as this was known, every man in the streets went right home, lest they might get him for a fifth. Milan, when I left it, was as still as a convent of friars."

"But will they really hang them?"

"Without doubt, and that directly," answered the man.

"And what will the people do?" asked the one who had questioned him before.

"The people will go and see them hung," said the tradesman.

"They had such a strong desire to see a Christian die in the open air, that the rascals wanted to honor the vicar of provisions upon such an occasion. But in exchange they will have four gluttons waited upon with all sorts of formality, accompanied by capuchins, and by the brethren who attend on these occasions; these fellows have deserved it. It is a visitation of providence, do you see, a necessary thing. They had already begun to take a fancy to enter shops to help themselves, without taking their purses out of their pockets; if they had been left alone, after they had done with the bread, they would have begun with the wine, and so from one thing to another. You may suppose they would not be in a hurry to discontinue such a convenient custom of their own accord. And I can tell you, that for an honest man who keeps an open shop, there was no great fun in the thought of being exposed to such treatment."

"To be sure," said one of his auditors; "to be sure," said all the others in chorus.

"And," continued the Milanese, wiping his beard with the cloth, "all this has been plotted a long time. There was a league, do you know that?"

"A league?"

"There was a league. A cabal made by the Navarese, by that cardinal there in France, you know, who has a name half Turkish, and

who every day, is contriving a new trick, to cast a shame on the crown of Spain. But especially he tries to bring them to bear on the city of Milan, because the knave knows very well that the principal strength of the King lies there."

"To be sure."

"Do you want proof of that? Those who made the greatest riot were foreigners, there were certain faces seen in Milan, which had never been seen there before. And indeed, I had forgotten to tell you a thing that was told to me for certain. The officers of justice caught hold of one of them in an inn——" Renzo who did not lose a syllable of what was saying, when that chord was touched, was seized with a chill, and gave a twitch, before he could restrain himself. No one, however, perceived it, and the narrator, without interrupting his story for an instant, went on. "A fellow, where he came from they can't tell yet, or who sent him, nor what class of men he belongs to, but certainly one of the leaders. Yesterday in the midst of the uproar, he played the devil, and not content with that, he began to make harangues and propositions—a few trifles—such as putting to death all the cavaliers. A villain! how would poor people live, if all the gentle folks were put out of the way. The police that had watched him, laid hands on him, found a great bundle of letters upon him, and carried him off to prison. But what do you think? His companions that were about the inn, to protect him, came in great numbers, and rescued him, the scoundrel."

"And what happened then?"

"Nobody knows, either he escaped, or he lies hid in Milan. There are people that have neither house nor home, and find every where some place to hide themselves away, as long as the devil is disposed to help them, and does help them. He leaves them however, at last, and they are caught when they are least looked for; pears will fall when they are ripe. It is known, however, so far, that the letters remain in the hands of the police, and that the whole cabal is described in them, and that a great many persons are compromised. May they get what they deserve, for they have turned half Milan topsy turvy, and wanted to do worse. They say the bakers are rogues. I know that as well as they do, but punish them at any rate according to law. There is grain concealed! Well, who does not know that? But it is the business of those who are at the head of the government to keep a good look out, and disinter it, and swing all the monopolizers and bakers together in the air. And if those who command won't do any thing, then the city ought to remonstrate, and if they don't listen at first, they should remonstrate again, keep remonstrating and you always get justice, but don't permit such an infernal way as this to be adopted in the city—fellows to enter in a fury into the shops and stores merely for booty."

Renzo's short repast had become like poison to him. It seemed to him a thousand years before he should get out of the inn, and leave it at a distance as well as the whole country, more than ten times he had said to himself,—"Lets' be off—lets' be off." But the fear of exciting suspicion, which had increased beyond measure, and tyrannized over all his thoughts, kept him fixed to his seat. In his perplexity, however, he thought this talkative person must certainly have soon done speaking of him, and determined within himself, to leave the house as soon as ever he began the subject again.

"This is the reason," said one of the company, "that I, who know how these things are done, and that honest men are always the worst treated in riots, would not let my curiosity get the better of me, and remained in my own house."

"And I, did I go?" said another.

"I!" added a third, "if I had been in Milan, would have left any business undone, and would have come directly home. I have a wife and children; and besides, I tell the truth, these riots don't please me." At this moment the landlord, who had been one of the auditors, went to the other end of the table to see what the stranger was doing. Renzo took advantage of the opportunity, beckoned him to him, asked what he had to pay, settled the account, though his funds were pretty short, and with out uttering another word, went straight to the street door, passed the threshold, took care not to take the road he had come by, but taking the opposite one, committed himself to Providence.

CHAPTER XVII.

It frequently happens that when we encourage a particular inclination, it is the source of much discomfort to us, imagine then how it must be when two are struggling within us at the same time, one at war with the other. Poor Renzo had been for several hours under the influence of two such, an inclination to run, and an inclination to lie hid; and the unpleasant news of the Milanese had extremely augmented them both. His adventure then had made a noise, orders were out then to arrest him; how many birri might there not be out in his pursuit! What orders might not have been despatched to keep a look out in the villages, at the inns, on the roads! It is true he reflected that there were only two of the birri who knew him, and that he did not carry his name written on his forehead, but a hundred stories rushed to his mind about fugitives being discovered and taken up in obscure roads, of their being recognized by their gait, by a suspicious appearance, and other marks they did not think of; every thing alarmed him. Although at the moment he left Gorgonzola,

the Avemaria was just striking, and the darkness, which was coming on, was continually diminishing those dangers, still he took the main road with reluctance, and proposed to himself to get into the first by-lane that promised to bring him to the point he was aiming at. At the begining he met with a few travelers, but his imagination being filled with these disagreeable apprehensions, he had not the resolution to stop any one and speak to him. He said six miles—thought he; if I go by the lanes and by-ways, and they should even come to be eight or ten, the limbs that have done the rest, will be able to do these likewise. Certainly I am not going towards Milan, then I must be going towards the Adda; if I keep going on, sooner or later I shall certainly reach it. The Adda has a good voice of its own, and when I get near it, I sha'nt want any body to tell me where it is. If there is a boat, I will cross it directly, otherwise I will stop until tomorrow in some field, upon some tree, like the birds. It is better to be on a tree than in a prison.

He soon came up with a lane to the left hand, and took it. At that hour, if he had fallen in with any body, he would not have been afraid to speak to him, but there was no sound of living footsteps; he therefore followed the direction of the road, and amused himself with his own reflections.

—I play the devil! I put to death all the cavaliers! a bundle of letters in my possession! My companions that were about the inn to protect me! I would give a trifle to find myself face to face with that tradesman, on the other side the Adda, (when shall I get across that blessed Adda?) and to stop him, and ask him at my ease where he fished up all that wonderful news. Learn, my good sir, that the affair was so and so; and that I played the devil just no farther than to aid Ferrer, as if he had been my brother. Learn also that those rascals, that according to you were my friends, wanted to play me a villanous trick, merely because I said a few words like a good Christian; learn that whilst you was taking care of your shop, I was getting my ribs half broke to save your signor vicar of provisions, whom I never saw or knew in the course of my life. Indeed, you may have to stop a while before I go again to help your gentry. It is true one ought to do it, they are our neighbors too. And that great bundle of letters, where all the cabal was described, and which is now in the hands of justice, as you say you know with so much certainty, what if I take it out and show it to you here on the spot, without the aid of the devil! Would you like to see that bundle? Here it is—what is it a single letter? Yes, sir, a single letter, and this letter if you have a mind to know, was written by a religious person that can teach you doctrine whenever you have a mind; a religious person, that meaning no wrong to you, has more virtue in every hair of his beard, than in all yours put together; and it is written, this letter as you see, I would just tell you, to another religious person, a man also who—now just see what sort of scoundrels my friends are. Pray mind what you're talking about another time, especially when you are talking of your neighbor.—

After some time, however, these and other thoughts like to them gave way altogether, and present circumstances entirely occupied the faculties of the poor pilgrim. The fear of being followed or discovered, which had so much embittered his journey during the day, influenced him no more, but how many circumstances rendered his present situation still more disagreeable. Darkness, solitude, increased fatigue, which now was becoming painful; a sharp and subtile night air, too, not comfortable to one who was provided with no other garments than those he had dressed himself with for his nuptials, in which he hoped to return to his house, only a few paces off, in triumph: and what rendered every thing still more annoying, was the traveling in this manner, at random, looking, as the saying is, with one's nose, for a place of rest and safety.

When it was necessary to pass through some settlement, he proceeded in the most cautious manner, looking, however, if any door was open, but seeing no other sign of people being up, save from an occasional light that appeared through some paper window. On the road, he sometimes stopped an instant, and listened in the hope to hear the blessed sound of the Adda, but in vain. No other sounds were heard but the howling of dogs, that came from some lone farm, wandering through the air, in an angry and querulous tone. When he drew nigh to one of these farms, the howling changed to a regular fierce barking, and in passing the door, he heard and almost saw the animal with his snout at the centre of the gateway, redoubling his barking, a circumstance that removed every temptation to knock and ask an asylum for the night; perhaps, also, if there had been no dogs, he would equally have wanted the courage to do it.—Who 's there? thought he.—What do you want at this time o' night? How did you come here? What's your name? Are there no inns to lodge at?—These are the questions they'll ask, if I knock, even if things take the best turn; unless indeed some timid person should live there and begin screaming out—help! thieves!—one must have something very satisfactory to answer directly, and what answer have I to give? When people hear a noise in the night, they think of nothing but thieves, house breakers, and plots, they never think that an honest man can be caught out in the night, unless, indeed it should be some rich man in his carriage.—He, therefore, put off that plan to the last extremity, and pursued the road, in the hope of discovering the Adda that night at least, if not of passing it, and that he should not be compelled to look for it by day light.

At length he came to where the cultivated part of the country ceased, and where the

land being uninclosed, ferns and broom grass grew wildly about. This seemed to him, if not a sign of the river, at least a reason for supposing it not far off, and after going on awhile, he stopped again to listen, but in vain. The disagreeableness of the road became augmented by the savageness of the place; there was neither mulberry, nor vine, nor any other sign of human cultivation, the which at first had been a sort of company to him. He went on, however, and feeling that certain notions were taking possession of his mind, some of those apparitions and fancies planted there by a hundred stories that he had heard, to drive them away or keep them down, he began as he walked on, to recite prayers for the dead.

Gradually, however, the plants became taller, scrub oaks and other shrubs appeared, and hastening on with more impatience than alacrity, he began to distinguish a few trees, and continuing in the same path, he perceived he was entering a wood. He felt a repugnance to enter it, but overcoming this, he reluctantly went on. The farther he went, the more this feeling increased, and the more every thing added to it. The trees at some distance from him, had a strange, deformed and singular aspect; the shadow of their tops slightly agitated, and which trembled in the moon light that fell upon the path, was displeasing to him; the rattling even of the dry leaves, moved about and crushed beneath his feet, was hateful to him. His limbs experienced a sort of dismay, an impulse of flight, whilst at the same time, it was with difficulty they could sustain his body. The night wind came still more severely on his brow and cheeks, he felt it beneath his garments, it pinched him, and penetrated more acutely his enfeebled joints, and almost extinguished the last remains of his vigor. At one time, the disgust, the undefined horror with which his mind struggled for sometime, appeared to have entirely prostrated him. He almost sunk beneath them, but alarmed at the state of terror in which he was, more than at any thing else, he called up his ancient courage, and ordered it to take the command. Thus reanimated for a moment, he stopped to deliberate an instant, and determined to return by the road he had come, to gain as quick as possible the last village he had passed, to return amongst men, to seek an asylum with them, even if it were at an inn. Whilst he was in this train of mind, and the rustling of the dry leaves had ceased, whilst all was silent around him, a noise reached his ears, a sort of murmur, a murmuring of running water. He looked, satisfied himself, and exclaimed, "It is the Adda!" He felt as if he had found a brother, a friend, a savior. His weariness was almost forgotten, his pulse beat again, he felt his blood flow freely and warmly again in his veins, he felt his confidence in himself return, and the darkness and fearfulness of things to lose their influence; he no longer hesitated to penetrate farther into the wood, guided by the friendly sound.

At length he reached the extremity of the plain, at the edge of a high bank, and peeping through the bushes with which it was covered, he saw the running water glistening at the foot of it. Lifting his eyes, he saw the extensive plain on the other side, scattered over with villages, with the hills beyond them, upon one of which was an extensive whitish spot, where he thought he could discern a city—that must be Bergamo. He went a little upon the slope of the bank, and putting the bushes on one side, with his arms and hands, he looked to see if there was any little bark moving on the river, and listened for the noise of oars, but he neither saw nor heard any thing. If it had been any stream of less importance than the Adda, he would have gone to the bottom of the bank with a view to ford it, but he knew very well that that was not to be done with the Adda.

He therefore began quietly to consult with himself what was best to do. If he should climb some tree and wait the day light there, for at least six hours that had yet to pass over, with such a keen biting air, in such a dress, he could not escape being chilled. To walk backwards and forwards, to keep himself during the time in motion, would not only be insufficient against the coolness of the night, but was asking too much of his poor limbs that had already done so much more than their duty. He fortunately remembered having observed in a field near to the uncultivated lands, a *cascinotto*. The countrymen of the Milanese plain have given this name to the cabins they build covered with straw, made with logs and branches of trees between them, and the apertures stopped up with mud; here during the summer they deposit the harvest, watching them in the night time, whilst at other seasons of the year they are abandoned. This he immediately fixed upon for his lodgings, and regaining the path, he repassed the wood, the bushes, and the uncultivated ground, reached the field, saw the log house and went to it. A sort of barn door it had, quite decayed, was badly hung, and ajar, without any fastening to it. Renzo opened it, and saw suspended in the air, and hanging by the crooks of some branches, a sort of rack like a hammock, but he had no curiosity to get up to it. He perceived some straw also upon the floor, and it struck him that he could get a very good nap there.

Before, however, he stretched himself upon the couch which Providence had there spread for him, he knelt down to return thanks for it, and for all the assistance which he had received in that terrible day. He then said his accustomed prayers, and having ended them, he asked pardon of God for having omitted them the preceding evening; nay, as he said, for having gone to sleep like a dog, or worse. And this was the reason, added he to himself, putting his hands on the straw whilst still on

his knees, I had such a beautiful awakening of it this morning. He then gathered the straw together that was near him and put it against his back, covering himself as well as he could to keep the cold off, which was severe enough even there, and then he drew himself up beneath it, with the intention of getting a good sleep, thinking that he had earned it that day with more than usual pains.

But scarce were his eyes closed, when in his memory or fancy, (in which it is not precisely known,) there arose such a crowded and incessant going and coming of forms, that every thought of sleep was driven away. The tradesman, the notary, the birri, the sword cutter, the landlord, Ferrer, the vicar, the company at the inn, the mob in the streets, then Don Abbondio, Don Rodrigo, every one of which awakened some recollection of misfortune or of hatred.

Three forms alone stood before him that stirred up no bitter remembrance, divested of all cause for apprehension, amiable in every thing, and two of them chiefly, very dissimilar to each other it is true, but both cherished in the young man's heart—one with black tresses, the other with a white beard. But the consolation he received in arresting his thoughts upon them, was any thing but pure and tranquil. When he thought of the good friar, he felt a more lively shame for his folly, for his scandalous intemperance, of the manner in which he had neglected his paternal counsels; and whilst his soul was dwelling upon the image of Lucia, we shall not endeavor to describe what he felt. The reader who knows all the circumstances of his attachment, must figure it to himself. And that poor Agnes—he did not forget Agnes, who had even chosen him, who had even considered him as one and the same with her only daughter, and who, before she had received from him the title of Mother, had taught both her lips and her heart to acknowledge it, and had shown her sincerity by the tenderest solicitude. But it was an additional sorrow, and not the least painful of them, the reflection, that precisely because of her affectionate intentions, and of her great benevolence towards him, the poor woman had been driven from her home, was a fugitive, uncertain about the future, and was harassed and distressed, in consequence of the very prospects she had relied upon for the repose and cheerfulness of the decline of her years. Poor Renzo, what a night! The fifth that had elapsed since his intended nuptials! What a chamber! What a matrimonial bed! And after such a day! And then the morrow—and the series of days to succeed. It is the will of God—he answered to all these thoughts that crowded upon each other—God must do what he pleases—he knows what he is doing—he does not forget us. Let it all go in penitence for my sins. Lucia is so good! God will not make her unhappy, not at all.—

Amidst these thoughts, and despairing altogether to court sleep, and the cold becoming still more disagreeable, so much so as to make him shiver, and his teeth to chatter every now and then, in spite of himself, he sighed for the approach of day, and measured with impatience the slow progress of the hours. I say measured, because every half hour, he heard in that vast silence the strokes of a clock resound, perhaps that of Trezzo: and the first stroke that reached his ear, was so unexpected, it was so impossible to imagine whence it came, that it filled his mind with a mysterious solemnity, as if it were a warning from some unseen person, in some unknown voice.

At length, when the clock had struck eleven,* the hour which Renzo had determined to rise at, he got up half benumbed, went on his knees, recited with more than his usual fervor, his morning orations, stood up, stretched himself, moved his legs and arms, his body and shoulders, to bring all his members into play together, for each of them seemed acting separately, blew first into one hand and then the other, rubbed them, open the door of the *cascinotto*, and the first thing he did, was to give a look round to see if any body was there. No one appearing, he sought the path he had trod the preceding evening, soon found it, in a plainer and more distinct manner than he remembered it, and again began his journey on it.

The sky announced a beautiful day: the moon stood in a corner of the heavens, pale and without rays, diffusing nevertheless over the immense space a grayish blue, which lower down in the east, was passing by a slight gradation into a rosy yellow. Nearer to the horizon, were a few clouds, in long and unequal masses, rather blue than brown, their lower edges tinged with a streak of fire, that every instant became more lively and intense. To the south, other nebulous masses had collected, light and fleeting, and were beaming with a thousand nameless colors, constituting the sky of Lombardy, so beautiful when it is serene, so splendid, and so tranquil. If Renzo had been there for his amusement, he would certainly have looked up, and admired a break of day, so different from the one he was accustomed to observe in his own mountains, but he saw nothing but the road, which he was rapidly moving on, both to get warm and to hasten his journey. He passed by the fields, the ferns, the bushes, went through the wood, looking around him, and reflecting with a sort of compassion for himself on the dread it had inspired him with a few hours ago; at length he reached the brow of the bank, looked down, and through the bushes saw a fisherman's bark, advancing slowly against the current, and skimming past the shore. Instantly he rushed down the bank to the water side, called out in a gentle voice to the fisherman, and as if he wanted him to render a service of not much importance, with a sort of indifferent half supplicating gesture, he beckoned him to ap-

* An hour before day.

proach. The fisherman cast a look along the bank, then along the river, and turned his bark to the shore where Renzo was standing. As soon as it reached him, where he was, with his foot partly in the water, he laid hold of the bow of the boat, and sprung into it.

"As a favor, but still paying for it," said he, "I should like to pass for a moment on the other side." The fisherman had supposed this to be the case, and already began to turn the boat in that direction, and Renzo seeing another oar in the bottom of the boat, stooped down and laid hold of it.

"Gently, gently," said the padrone,* but observing the address with which Renzo was preparing to use it, added, "ah, ah! I see you belong to the craft."

"A little," replied Renzo, and set to with a vigor and skill beyond the art of a dilettante. And pulling with all his might, gave a dark look to the shore he was escaping from: then anxiously turning his eyes to the one they were making for, was vexed that they were obliged to reach it in an oblique line, for the current was too rapid there to permit them to go in a straight one, and the bark partly cutting and partly being carried by the stream, was obliged to make a diagonal course. As it happens in undertakings somewhat obscure and confused, that the difficulties present themselves at first in a mass, and in the execution appear more in detail; Renzo, now that the Adda was almost crossed, felt some inquietude in his uncertainty whether it was the frontier of the Dutchy of Milan, or whether this obstacle once surmounted, another was not to succeed to it. Calling out therefore to the fisherman, and indicating with a nod the white spot he had observed the night before, and which now appeared more distinctly, he said, "Is that place Bergamo?"

"The city of Bergamo," answered the fisherman.

"And is this the Bergamasc shore?"

"Saint Mark's land."

"Viva San Marco! exclaimed Renzo. The fisherman was silent. At length they reached the shore, Renzo jumped out, thanked God in his heart, and then returned thanks to the fisherman, took a berlinga from his pocket, which all things considered, was depriving himself of no small sum, and gave it to him. The man looked at the Milanese shore, and then up and down the river, extended his hand, took the gift, put it into his pocket, compressed his lips, finished by making a cross with his forefinger on them, and then, pushing off again, said, with a very significant face, "a good journey to you."

That the reader may not be surprised at such speedy and discreet courtesy towards a stranger, we must inform him, that being often asked to render a similar service to rogues and bandits, he was in the habit of crossing them, not so much on account of the paltry and uncertain reward he got, as from a desire not to make himself enemies in that class. He always obliged them when he was quite sure of not being observed by the customhouse men, the birri and men on the watch. Thus, without any great affection, for either of the parties, he endeavored to satisfy all, with that kind of impartiality to which a man accommodates himself, who is obliged to have dealings with one set of men, and to render an account to another.

Renzo stopped a few moments on the bank to look at the opposite shore, the ground that a short time before was too hot to keep his feet still upon. "Ah! I have got away from it at last! was his first thought, remain there accursed land!—was his second adieu to it: but the third brought to his recollection who he had left in it. Crossing his arms upon his breast, and sighing, he cast his eyes upon the water which was running at his feet, and thought,—it has passed under the bridge! Thus, after the manner of his countrymen, he spoke of that of Lecco. Ah! infamous world—enough, it is God's will.

Turning his back upon these painful scenes, he commenced his journey, keeping in view the white spot on the slope of the mountain, until he should be able to fall into a direct road to it. He accosted passengers now with an easy air, without hesitation and without studying any more to conceal his movements, mentioned the name of the place where his cousin dwelt, with a view to find the way to it. The first person from whom he got information respecting it, said it was nine miles off.

The walk was not a cheerful one. Besides his own cares, his eyes were every moment shocked by painful objects, which convinced him that he would find here the same penury he had left behind in his own country. On the road, at the farms, in the villages, beggars abounded, not so by profession but become mendicants by necessity; their misery, appearing more in their countenances than in their dress. Countrymen, mountaineers, artisans, entire families, a mingled murmuring of supplications, of quarreling and squalling of children. The sight of so much misery, besides the compassion it awakened in his heart, brought him to reflect upon his own affairs.

—Who knows—he kept meditating—what my fortune will be? Whether I shall find any work to do, as there has been in past years? Well, Bartolo was attached to me, he is a good fellow, he has got a little money together, he has asked me to come so often, he will not abandon me. And then, Providence has favored me until now, and will continue to help me.

In the meantime his appetite, which had been tolerably sharp for some time, kept increasing as he went on, and although Renzo, when he first began to think about it, thought he could do very well to the end of his journey, which had only two miles to be completed,

* The name by which the owners of these small craft are called.

still he imagined it would not be quite so well to present himself to his cousin like a beggar, and his first salutation be—give me something to eat; so he took all his wealth from his pocket, and counted it in the palm of his hand: it needed no great arithmetic, but still there was enough to make a little repast; he, therefore stepped into an inn, and having paid for what he had got, found he had a few sous still left.

Going out, he observed lying in the road near the door, and he was very near treading upon them, two women, an elderly one, and a younger one with an infant, which after drawing in vain at her breasts, began to cry; all of them were of the color of death, and at their feet laid a man, in whose face and limbs the indications of former robustness were evident, although subdued and extinguished by continued want. All stretched their hands towards him as he stept out in a vigorous and brisk manner, not one of them spoke; what words could have been more expressive?

"There, Providence sends you this!" said Renzo, putting his hand hastily into his pocket, and clearing it of the few sous he had left, put them into the hand nearest to him, and went on.

The refreshment he had taken, and the good he had done, (for we are composed both of soul and body) had re-invigorated and given fresh courage to his mind. Certainly, the act of giving away his last penny, had inspired him with more confidence for the future, than the finding of ten times the amount would have done; for if Providence in order to sustain during that day, those unfortunate creatures, whom he had only just chanced to see, had kept in reserve the last resources of a stranger, a fugitive, far from his home, uncertain even himself about his future existence; how was it possible to suppose it would abandon the instrument it had made use of, and whom it had endowed with a feeling at once so lively, so efficacious, and so free from selfish considerations? This was the predominating thought in the youth's mind. During the remainder of the road, revolving in his mind what had occurred, every thing appeared in a more favorable aspect to him. This dearth and misery must have an end, and harvests come round every year; in the meantime he had his cousin Bartolo and his own ability; he had at home too a little store of ready money, which he would soon send for. With that at the worst, he could live from day to day, in an economical way, until times were better. Prosperous times before us once more—pursued Renzo in his imagination—there will be a press of work again, the employers will be struggling to get Milanese workmen, because they are best acquainted with the business: then we shall hold up our heads again; they that want good workmen, will have to give good wages, one may live then, and put by a little too; a little cottage may be furnished, and the women written to, to come on—but why wait so long? With that little store of money I should have had to keep us this winter there, and why can't we live with it here. There's no want of curates any where. When the two dear females come, and we get into a house, what a pleasure to stroll about here all together; to ride as far as the Adda and make our repast upon its bank, precisely on the bank, and point out to them the place where I got into the bark, the thorn bushes I had to g t through, and the place I looked out to see if there was a boat.

At length he reached the place where his cousin dwelt: before he entered it, he perceived a lofty building with several rows of windows one above the other, with a smaller space between them than is usually appropriated to the stories of a house; this must be the filature—he enters, and amidst the noise of the water and the wheels, asks in a loud voice, if Bartolo Castagneri was there.

"Signor Bartolo! There he is!"

—Signor! thought Renzo, that is a good sign! and seeing his cousin, he ran to him. Bartolo turning round, recognized Renzo, who exclaimed, "Here I am!" His cousin uttered a cry of surprise, and raising their arms, they mutually embraced. After the first welcomes, Bartolo drew the youth away from the noise of the machinery, and from the inquisitive eyes of the rest, into a room, and said to him, "I am glad to see thee, but thou are a pretty sort of young fellow. How many times I asked thee to come, and thou hast always refused, and now thou comest at a moment when things are not quite as I should wish them."

"What shall I say to you? The fact is, I am not come now of my own will," said Renzo, and in a brief manner, but not without emotion, narrated his sorrowful history.

"This will make another pair of sleeves," said Bartolo. "Poor Renzo! But thou hast relied on me, and I will not abandon thee. It is true, there is no demand for workmen, indeed every establishment has enough to do to keep its own, barely to keep the work a going. But the proprietor likes me, and is very well off, and to tell the truth, without boasting, he owes a good deal of what he has to me. He finds the capital, and I contribute my little ability. I am the foreman, dost thou know? and in fact to tell thee the truth, I am the factotum. Poor Lucia Mondella! I remember her, as if it was only yesterday; a good lass! always the best behaved at church, and when I used to pass by her cottage—I see it now, that cottage, at the end of the village, with that fine fig tree that hung over the wall——"

"No, no, say no more about it."

"I was going to say that when one passed by that cottage, one always heard that reel going, going, going. And that Don Rodrigo! even in my time he had begun his tricks, but the devil has got astride of him now, as far as I see, and he'll ride on as long as God leaves the bridle on his neck. And as I was telling thee, we feel what want is, here too a little—and by the by how is your appetite?"

"I ate a little on the road."

"And how art thou off for money?"

Renzo opened one of his hands, put the end of his palm near his mouth, and blew gently along it.

"Never mind," said Bartolo, "I have some, keep up thy spirits, things will change soon if God pleases, and then thou can'st return it to me, and have some to spare for thyself too."

"I have some small savings at home, and I will send for them."

"That's all right; in the meantime thou mayst depend upon me. God has been good to me, that I may do good with it, and if I do not do it to relatives and friends, who shall I do it to?"

"This is what I said of Providence!" exclaimed Renzo, affectionately pressing the hand of his good cousin.

"So then," said Bartolo, "there has been a great uproar in Milan; they seem to me to be a little crazy; we have heard some little about it, but thou shall't tell it to me more minutely. We have a good deal to talk about. In these parts, you see, things go on more quietly, and are managed with more judgment. The city has purchased two thousands loads of wheat from a merchant at Venice, wheat that comes from Turkey to be sure, but when eating's in the question, one does not look so nicely as to where things come from. Now just see what took place; it so turned out that the magistrates of Verona and Brescia shut the passes, and said, No wheat shall pass by this road. Well, what do the Bergamascs? They despatch a man to Venice that knows how to talk. Away he goes in haste, presents himself to the Doge, and tells him what a fine piece of business this is. But such a speech he made him, a speech they say, just such as should be printed. What a thing it is to have a man that knows how to talk! Directly comes an order out to let the wheat pass, and the magistrates are not only obliged to let it pass, but are forced to furnish an escort, and it is coming on. And care has been taken of the district too. Another clever man has made the Senate understand that the people here were starving, and the Senate has granted them four thousand bushels of millet. This will help to make bread. And then, need I say it to thee? If there's no bread, we can eat meat and other things. God has been good to me, as I have told thee. Now I will take thee to my employer, I have spoken of thee, to him, often, and he will receive thee well. A good Bergamascon, after the old fashion, a man with plenty of room in his heart. It is true he did not expect thee now, but when he hears thy story—and then he knows how to set a value on workmen, for the famine will pass away, but business will go on. But first of all, I must tell thee of one thing. Dost thou know what name the people of this country give to us, who come from the State of Milan?"

"What do they call us?"

"They call us numskulls!"*

"A pretty name to be sure."

"So it is, that whoever is born in the Milanese, and wants to live amongst the Bergamascs, will have to put up with it. These people call a Milanese numskull, just as commonly as a cavalier is called illustrissimo."

"I suppose they call them so that consent to be called so."

"My son, if thou art not disposed to be called numskull every minute, dont lay thy account with living here. Would'st thou always be putting thy hand to thy knife? And when, for example, thou hadst killed two, three, four, the rest would come and kill thee, and then, what a fine thing to appear before God with three or four homicides to account for!"

"But a Milanese who has a little—" and here he tapped his forehead with his finger, as he had done at the inn, at the sign of the full moon, "I mean to say, a man who knows what he is about?"

"It's all the same, he is called numskull too. Dost thou want to hear how my employer speaks of me, when he is talking about me to his friends? 'That numskull has been a gift from heaven in my business, if I had not that numskull to help me, I should have trouble enough.' It is the custom."

"It is a very ridiculous custom. Is it possible that seeing what we know how to do, that we are the people who have brought this art amongst them, and are the men who make it prosper, that they won't correct themselves?"

"They have'nt done it yet; time may correct it with the boys that are growing up, but for the men there is no remedy, they have got the habit, and they will never put it off. And what after all does it come to? The pretty tricks that they have been playing you were a little worse than this, to say nothing of what our dear fellow-countrymen have been wanting to do thee."

"That's very true, and if there's nothing worse here—"

"Now thou art persuaded of this, every thing will go well. Come to the proprietor, and take courage."

Every thing, in fact, went very well, and justified the promises of Bartolo so thoroughly, that we think it unnecessary to enter into any details about it. Providence had really interfered, for we shall see by and by what foundation there was for placing any reliance on the savings that Renzo had left behind him in his house.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT same day, the 13th of November, an express arrived to the podesta of Lecco, pre-

* Baggiani.

senting a despatch from the capitano di justizia, containing an order to use every possible and opportune inquisition, to discover whether a certain youth named Lorenzo Tramaglino, a silk spinner, who had escaped from the custody *prædicti egregii domini capitanei* had returned, *palam vel clam*, to his home, *ignotum verum in territorio Leuci; quod si compertum fuerit sic esse*, the podesta must use diligence—*quanta maxima diligentia fieri poterit*, to arrest him; and securely binding him, *videlicet*, with good fetters, in consequence of the insufficiency of hand-cuffs for the aforesaid subject, should cause him to be conducted to prison, and there kept under good custody, to be delivered to whomsoever should be sent to receive him; and whether the matter was so, or was not so, *accedatis ad domum prædicti Laurentii Tramaliini, et facta debita diligentia, quidquid ad rem repertum fuerit auferatis; et informationes de illius pava qualitate, vita, et complicibus sumatis*, and of all matters, said and done, found or not found, taken or left behind, *diligenter referatis*. The podesta, having got it properly certified that the subject was not returned to his village, caused the consul of the village to come to him, and conducted by him, and with a great train of notaries and birri, went to the indicated house. It was locked, and no one was to be found who had the key, or who would acknowledge he had it. The lock therefore was broke, and all due diligence used, meaning thereby, that they proceeded as when a city is taken by assault. The fame of this expedition flew immediately through the district, and reached the ears of father Christopher, who, not less astonished than afflicted, asked various persons for information about the cause of so unexpected an incident, but he got nothing but conjectures and contradictory reports, and immediately wrote to father Buonaventura, certain of receiving from him more precise intelligence. In the meantime the relations and friends of Renzo were cited to depose what they knew of his depraved qualities; the name of Tramaglino became a misfortune, a scandal, a crime. The village was all in confusion. Little by little it was found out that Renzo had escaped from the hands of justice, in the midst of the city of Milan, and that he had disappeared. It was whispered about that he had done something very bad, what it was was not stated, or rather it was told in a hundred ways. The worse it became, the less it was believed wherever Renzo was known to be a good moral youth. The greater part of the people, whispered into each others ears, that all this was part of the machinery moved by that overbearing Don Rodrigo, just to ruin his poor rival. So true it is, that induction sometimes, without a proper knowledge of facts, makes us wrong even scoundrels.

But we, with the facts in our hand, can safely affirm, that if he had no direct influence in bringing about Renzo's misfortune, it was as agreeable to him as if it had been his own doings, and he rejoiced at it, with his confidants, and principally with Count Attilio. This gentleman, according to his first intentions, ought to have been at that time in Milan, but at the first news of the tumult that had arisen, and of the mob that had got together—in any other attitude than that of standing to get a drubbing—he had thought it best to delay his return a little, until more favorable news should arrive. And the more, because having given offence to many, he had some reason to fear that some of them who were silent only on account of their want of power, might feel encouraged in the present circumstances, to avail themselves of so favorable a moment to revenge the wrongs of all. But this did not last long; the order received from Milan for the execution of the proceeding against Renzo, was an indication that matters there were returned to their old state, and the direct news which they got almost at the same moment, made it certain. Count Attilio departed immediately, encouraging his cousin to persist in his enterprize, and promising that on his part he would immediately exert himself to rid him of the friar, on whom the fortunate accident that had happened to his clownish rival, would prove an admirable card to play. Scarce was Attilio gone, when Griso arrived from Monza, safe and sound, and communicated to his master what he had discovered: that Lucia had taken refuge in a monastery under the protection of a certain signora, and was shut up there, just as if she was a nun herself, never stepping over the threshold, and even assisting at the church service, through a grated window: a circumstance very displeasing to many, who having heard something about her adventures, and extravagant things said of her beauty, wanted to see for once what sort of a person she was.

This relation made Don Rodrigo really feel as if the devil had got astride of him, or to come nearer to it, made the one he had inside of him worse than ever. All the favorable circumstances hitherto, inflamed his passions still more; that mixture of punctilio, rage, and infamous desire, of which his passion was composed. Renzo was absent, driven away, outlawed, so that every thing became lawful against him, and even his promised bride might be considered as enemy's property: then the only man in the world who was willing and able to make the affair his own, and make a noise about it that would be heard through the country, the enraged friar, would probably in a short time be also removed from the possibility of doing any harm. And now a new impediment occurred, not to counterbalance those facilities, but to render them useless. A Monza Monastery, when even there had been no princess in the case, was too hard a bone for the teeth even of a Don Rodrigo; in vain he exercised his imagination about that asylum, he could neither form a plan for violating it by force or by treachery. He was almost ready to give up the enterprise, and

to go to Milan, avoiding Monza on the way, and to seek amongst his friends, and amidst the amusements of the place, to dissipate the feelings which now tormented him. But—his friends,—gently—about these friends; instead of dissipating those feelings, he might find in their society new sources of vexation; those feelings might be roused still more, for Attilio undoubtedly had sounded the trumpet, and put them all in a state of expectation. Every one would be asking him about the fair mountaineer, and he must have an answer to give. Had he determined, had he attempted, what had he obtained? He had undertaken an affair, rather an ignoble one it is true; but, then, one can't always regulate one's own caprices—the real business is to gratify them. And then how had he succeeded? How? Why shamed and disgraced by a country fellow and a friar! That would never do! And when an unexpected piece of good luck had removed one out of the way, and a clever friend the other, without any trouble on his part, he was so simple as not to know how to profit by the conjuncture, and had cowardly withdrawn from the enterprize. It was enough to prevent his ever showing his face again amongst gentlemen, or to oblige him to keep his hand always on his hilt. And then, how could he ever return to, or how could he remain at, his villa, in a neighborhood where, to say nothing of the incessant and irritating remembrances of his passion, he would have to bear the dishonor of having failed in an enterprise? Where he should both have increased the public hatred, and diminished the idea of his power? Where he could read in the face of every low fellow, even whilst he was bowing, the bitter—you have had to swallow that, I am glad of it.—The path of iniquity, says the manuscript here, is broad, but that is not the same thing as being comfortable; it has its own difficulties and troubles, and is wearisome and fatiguing, although it is all down hill.

To Don Rodrigo, who would not leave it, nor tread back his steps, nor stop, and who could not advance by himself alone, a mode occurred by which he might succeed, and it was to select for his assistant, a man whose hands frequently reached what others could not even get a sight of. A man or a devil, for whom the difficulty of undertakings was frequently the stimulus which induced him to enter upon them. But this plan had its inconveniences and its dangers, the more weighty, because it was not easy to make an accurate calculation how far the thing might be carried; for no one could venture to anticipate to what lengths that man would go, when once he was embarked in a project; he was a most potent auxiliary, but a most absolute and dangerous leader.

These thoughts kept Don Rodrigo several days, betwixt yes and no, each of them more than distressing. In the mean time a letter arrived from his cousin, informing him that the plan had been started. Soon after the lightning, the thunder burst; that is to say, one morning he received information that father Christopher had left the convent of Pescarenico. This prompt and complete success, and Attilio's letter, which was full of encouragement, and threats of being laughed at if he did not pursue the matter, inclined Don Rodrigo more than ever to risk every thing; and what gave the decisive blow was the unexpected news that Agnes was returned home, an impediment the less in relation to Lucia. We must give an account of these two events, beginning with the last.

The two poor women had scarce got settled in their asylum, when the news of the great uproar at Milan reached Monza, and of course the monastery; accompanied with an infinite series of particulars, which kept increasing and varying at every instant. The fattora, who communicated with both the town and the monastery, had news of course from both, heard every thing that was said, and told it to the guests. "Two, six, eight, four, seven, they have put in prison—these will he hanged—part of them before the bakery of the Grucce, part of them at the head of the street where the vicar of provisions lives. And hear this! another that belongs to Lecco or thereabouts has escaped. I don't know his name, but I will get some one who comes here, to tell me, to see if you know it."

This news, with the circumstance of Renzo going to Milan exactly on that fatal day, made the women unquiet, and especially Lucia, but how was it, when the fattora afterwards told them, "he is from your place, the man that has run off to avoid being hanged, a silk spinner, who is called Tramaglino, do you know him?"

Lucia was sitting hemming some work, it dropped from her hand; she turned pale, her countenance fell, so that the fattora must have perceived it, if she had been nigh to her. Agnes was also disturbed, but not so much but that she could keep her countenance, and with some effort answered that in a small place every body was known, that she knew him, and could hardly believe that such a thing had happened to him, as he was a very quiet young man. She then asked if he had certainly escaped, and where to.

"Every body says he has escaped, but where to nobody knows, they may be able to catch him yet, and he may get off, but if they once get him, that quiet young man of yours—"

Fortunately the fattora was called away here, leaving mother and daughter in great distress. More than one day the poor woman and the desolate girl had to remain in this state of doubt, imagining all sorts of causes and reasons, and the consequences of a fact so painful; and in commenting, each to herself, or in an under tone of voice together, whenever they had an opportunity, upon those terrible words.

At length, one Thursday,* a man came to

* Friday is a day when no meat but fish is eaten.

the monastery to ask for Agnes. He was a fishmonger of Pescarenico, who was going to Milan according to his custom, to sell his fish; and the good friar Christopher had asked him in passing by Monza, to call at the monastery, and salute the women in his name; requesting him to inform them of all he knew about the sad case of Renzo, to encourage them to have patience and to confide in God, and that he, a poor friar, would certainly not forget them, and would vigilantly watch for every opportunity to be useful to them; in the meantime he would not fail every week to send them some information by the same means, or by a similar opportunity. Respecting Renzo, the man could give them no positive account, further than the proceedings put in execution respecting his house, and the search made after him; but all the trouble they had taken had been in vain, for they had good intelligence that he had got to Bergamo. The certainty of this, it need not be said, was a great balm to the distress of Lucia; from that moment her tears ran more easily and gently, she received more comfort from her secret conversations with her mother, and henceforwards thanks were mingled with all her prayers.

Gertrude frequently made her come into a private parlor, and occasionally detained her a long time, taking pleasure in the ingenuousness and gentleness of the poor girl, and in receiving at times her thanks and blessings. She told her also, in confidence, a part (the fair part) of her story, what she had suffered, in order to come there to suffer, so that the first wonder and doubt of Lucia were changed to pity. She found in her story more than sufficient to explain whatever had appeared strange in the conduct of her benefactress, not forgetting either what Agnes had said about gentlefolks being a little cracked. Nevertheless, however she might feel disposed to return the confidence Gertrude had reposed in her, she was careful not to speak of her new apprehensions, of her new misfortune, of what that silk spinner was to her, that she might run no risk of spreading a story so full of distress and scandal. She avoided also, as much as possible, giving any reply to the curious questions that were put to her, respecting her story before she had become betrothed, but her reasons for this were not prudential ones. It was because that part of her own story appeared to the poor innocent girl more difficult to relate than any thing she had yet heard, or that she thought she ever should hear from the signora; she had heard of oppression, of plots, of sufferings, all painful and disagreeable things, but still they were things that could be spoken of. In her own simple story, there prevailed throughout a feeling, to be expressed only by a word it did not appear possible for her to utter whilst speaking of herself, and for which no paraphrase could be substituted which would not wound her modesty—it was love.

At such times Gertrude was tempted to be displeased at these repulses, but she was so affectionate, so respectful, so grateful, and showed so much reliance on her! At times, perhaps, that modesty, so delicate, so tender, so fearful, displeased her still more on another account, but such feelings disappeared in the suavity of the thought which recurred to her whenever she contemplated Lucia—she is the object of my benevolence. And it was true, because, besides the asylum, those conversations, and those familiar caresses were a source of much comfort to Lucia. She found also another in constant occupation, and was always asking them to give her something to do, even in the parlor she always carried something or other to keep her hands in exercise. But how sorrowful thoughts will intrude themselves every where! even whilst she was engaged in sewing, which before this she had never paid much attention to, every now and then her reel would come to her mind, and with the reel how many other things.

The second Thursday they got another message from father Christopher, confirming the escape of Renzo, but no accurate information respecting his misadventure, because as has already been stated, the capuchin had expected it from his brother friar at Milan, to whom he had recommended him, and he wrote that he had neither seen him nor received any letter by him; that a country man had indeed come to the convent to ask for him, but not having found him at home, had gone away, and had not returned.

The third Thursday, no message arrived, which not only deprived the women of the comfort they so much wished and looked for, but as it happens in every little thing to those who are afflicted and in trouble, was the cause of much inquietude, and of a hundred distressing doubts. Before this, Agnes had been thinking of paying a visit to her cottage, and this novelty of receiving no message, determined her to do so. It was something strange for Lucia to remain behind, separated from the mother in whom she had always confided, but the extreme desire to learn something, and the security she enjoyed in an asylum so sacred and so protected, conquered her repugnance. It was therefore determined between them, that Agnes, on the following day, should await the fisherman in the road on his return from Milan, and should ask of him the favor of taking her in his cart as far as her native mountains. Having met him, and asked if father Christopher had delivered him no embassy for her, he stated that he had remained fishing the whole of the day preceding his departure, and that he had received no message whatever from the friar. He consented to conduct her without entreaty, she therefore took leave of the Lady and of her daughter, not without tears, promising to send some information immediately and to return soon, and then departed.

No accident happened to them on the journey, they rested part of the night in an inn upon the road, according to custom, resumed

their journey before day, and arrived early in the morning at Pescarenico. Agnes alighted at the convent, took leave of her conductor with many thanks, and since she was there, wished to see her benefactor, the good friar, before she went to her house. She rang the convent bell, and Friar Galdino, he who made the perquisition of nuts, opened the door.

"Oh, my good woman, what wind has brought you here?"

"I want to see father Christopher!"

"Father Christopher? he is not here."

"Will it be long before he comes?"

"Why—!" said the friar, shrugging up his shoulders, and burying his bald head in his cowl.

"Where is he gone?"

"To Rimini."

"To—?"

"To Rimini."

"Where is that place?"

"Ay, ay, ay," answered the friar, and cutting the air vertically with his open hand, he signified the distance was great.

"Oh, me; oh, me! But what is he gone away so suddenly for?"

"Because the provincial father wished him to go."

"And what did they send him away for, who did so much good here? Oh, poor me!"

"If our superiors were obliged to give reasons for all the orders they give, what would become of obedience, my good woman?"

"Yes, but this will ruin me."

"I'll tell you what the reason is. They have no doubt been in want at Rimini of a good preacher (we have them every where, but sometimes the man is wanted that seems made on purpose). The father provincial there has written no doubt to the father provincial here, to know if he had such and such a man; and our father provincial, will have said—father Christopher is precisely the man—and so it turns out to be in fact.

"Oh, wretched we! when did he go?"

"The day before yesterday."

"See now, if I had only listened to my first inspiration to come a few days before. And can't you tell when he is going to return, within a day or two, or so?"

"My good woman! the provincial father knows, if indeed he does know. When one of our father preachers has taken the wing, there is no telling on what branch he may alight. He is sought for here, he is sought for there, and we have convents in all the four parts of the world. You may be quite sure that father Christopher is making a noise at Rimini, with his quaresimal discourse; for he does not always preach as he used to do here for the country folks, any thing that came uppermost, but has his sermons all nicely written out, beautiful things. Well, the fame of this great preacher is rumored about, and then you know, they can ask for him from——. What do I know where they can't ask him from? And then we must give him up, for as we live upon the charity of every body, so it is just that we give every body a little of what we have got."

"Oh, misery! misery!" exclaimed Agnes again, "how can I get on without him? He was a father to us. This will prove our ruin."

"Listen, my good woman! father Christopher was truly a man; but we have others besides him, don't you know that? full of charity and of ability, and who know how to conduct themselves both with the rich and the poor. Do you want father Athanasius? Do you want father Girolamo? Do you want father Zaccaria? That's a man of worth do you see, father Zaccaria. And don't you now, like some ignorant women, think little of him, because he is so thin, and has such a small voice, and such a poor little beard. I don't say he is a great preacher, every one has his gifts; but to take counsel from, he is a man, do you know that?"

"Oh, holy patience!" exclaimed Agnes, with that mixture of gratitude and vexation which words inspire that have nothing but their good intention to recommend them. "What is it to me what this man is, and what that man is not, when that poor good man that is gone away was the one that was acquainted with our affairs, and had got things in a way to help us."

"When it is necessary we must have patience."

"I know it," replied Agnes, "excuse the trouble I have given you."

"Nothing at all, my good woman, I am sorry on your account, and if you make up your mind to consult any of our fathers, here the convent is, that won't fly away at any rate. I shall give you a call soon, about the perquisition for oil."

"Health be with you," said Agnes, and went on towards her village, deserted, confused and disconcerted, like a poor blind person that had lost his staff.

Being a little better informed than friar Galdino, we can state how matters really had gone. Attilio was scarcely arrived in Milan, than he paid a visit as he had promised Don Rodrigo, to their common uncle of the secret council. (It was composed at that period, of thirteen personages of the cloak and sword; the advisers of the governor, and who, in the case of his death or removal, temporarily assumed the government.) This count uncle, one of the ancients of the council, enjoyed a certain influence there, but in the use of it, and in making it felt out of doors, he had no rival! an ambiguous language, a significant silence, a middle course, an expression of the eyes which said—I may not speak,—an encouragement without promises, a ceremonious way of threatening, all was directed to that end, and all that he did, more or less, turned to account. So much so, that even when he said—I can do nothing in this matter—a thing sometimes said in all sincerity, it was said in a way

that he was not believed, it only served to increase the conceit of, and consequently the reality of his power; like those boxes we see in the apothecaries shops, with Arabic words on them, and which have got nothing inside, yet still are useful in keeping up the credit of the shop.

The credit of the count uncle, which for a long time had been gradually increasing, latterly had made, all at once, a gigantic stride, upon the extraordinary occasion of a journey to Madrid, with a mission to the court, where to learn what sort of reception was accorded to him, it was necessary to hear the relation from himself.—To say nothing more of it, the Count Duke had treated him with a particular condescension, and had admitted him into his confidence, to such a point, that upon one occasion he had asked him in the presence of the court itself,—if he was pleased with Madrid—and another time he went so far as to say to him, when they were alone, standing at a window,—that the cathedral of Milan was the greatest temple in all the King's dominions.—

After proper expressions of respect to the count uncle, and presenting to him the salutations of his cousin, Attilio, with a grave countenance, which he well knew how to put on, said, "I believe it is an affair of duty on my part, without a breach of confidence towards Don Rodrigo, to inform my uncle of an affair, which, if he does not take it in hand, may become serious, and produce consequences—"

"Some of his mad——I suppose—"

"In truth, I must state that Don Rodrigo is not in the wrong in this case, but he is somewhat warm—and, and as I was saying, if my uncle does not—"

"What is it? let us see!"

"There is a capuchin in those parts, who keeps persecuting my cousin, and the matter is brought to such a point, that——"

"How often have I told you both, that you should let the friars boil* in their own broth. Its as much as one can bear to let them go on as they do, with those it becomes them to do with. But you who could keep out of their way——"

"Indeed, uncle, it is my duty to tell you that Rodrigo would have avoided him, if it had been possible: and the friar who is annoying him, and who takes every possible way to provoke him——"

"What the deuce is the friar persecuting my nephew for?"

"Why first of all, he is a hot headed person, known to be such indeed, and who professes to dislike cavaliers. This friar, protects, directs, what do I know about it? a young country girl of those parts, and has a sort of charity for the creature—a charity, not an interested charity, but a jealous, suspicious, ill-natured kind of interest."

"I understand," said the count uncle, and with a fund of stupidity depicted by nature on his countenance, concealed and covered up however pretty well by his politic manœuvres, he let out a ray of malice, that was admirable in its way.

"For sometime," continued Attilio, "this friar has taken it into his head, that Rodrigo had I do not know what sort of designs upon this——"

"Taken it into his head—taken it into his head. I know Don Rodrigo myself pretty well, and he will stand in need of some other advocate besides yourself, to justify him in affairs of this kind."

"That Rodrigo, uncle, may have joked with the young girl, meeting her on the road, is very likely to be true; he is a young fellow, and at any rate he is not a capuchin; but these are follies not fit to speak of before my uncle: the truth of the matter is, that the friar has undertaken to speak of Rodrigo as if he was nothing but a ruffian, and tries to excite the whole country against him,"

"And the other friars?"

"They don't trouble themselves about it, they know he is a hot headed man, and have a great respect for Rodrigo, but on the other side this friar has great influence with the country people, for he plays the saint, and ——"

"I suppose he does not know Rodrigo is my nephew?"

"Not know that! It is that exactly which makes him so audacious."

"How? how?"

"Because, and he says it himself, that it gives him greater pleasure to persecute Rodrigo in this way, just because he has a natural protector of such authority as your excellency: and because he laughs at politicians and great men, and says that the cordon of Saint Francis has all the swords tied up, and that——"

"Insolent friar, what is his name?"

"Brother Christopher of——" said Attilio, and the Count Zio, taking down a writing case, wrote down the friars humble name. In the meantime Attilio went on, "He has always been just such a man, his history is known. He was a plebeian, and having a little money was always entering into competition with the cavaliers of the town where he lived, and enraged because he could not succeed with all of them, he slew one, and to avoid punishment turned friar."

"Bravo! capital! we'll see, we'll see," said the count uncle, puffing all the time.

"Now," continued Attilio, "he is more enraged than ever, having failed in a scheme that he took a great interest in, and from this my uncle will comprehend what sort of a man he is. He wanted to have that creature of his married; whether it was to save her from the dangers of the world, your excellency understands me—or whatever was the reason, at any rate he wanted to have her married, and so he found out a—man, another creature of his, a fel-

* Quarrel with one another.

low, that perhaps, and indeed without perhaps, you will know by name, as I hold it certain that the secret council has had to occupy itself about such a worthy subject."

"Who is the man?"

"A spinner of silk, Lorenzo Tramaglino, he that——"

"Lorenzo Tramaglino," exclaimed the count uncle. "Capital! Well done, friar! To be sure—in fact—he had a letter for a—it's a pity but—never mind, it's all right. And why did not Don Rodrigo tell me something of all this, and let things get so far ahead, without applying to one who can and who will advise and sustain him?

"I will tell the truth about that too; on one side, knowing how many perplexities, and how many things your excellency has to think about, (here the count swelling, put his hand on his head, as if to signify what a task it was, to have so many important matters there) felt rather conscientious about giving you any more trouble: and indeed, I will tell the whole. As far as I have been able to understand, he is so embittered, so unhinged, so annoyed by the villanies of that friar, that he has a greater inclination to do himself justice, in some summary way, than to obtain it in a regular method by the prudence and assistance of our uncle. I have tried to throw water on the fire, but seeing things were getting worse, I have thought it my duty to apprise you of it, since your excellency is the pillar and the head of our house——"

"You would have done better if you had told it a little before."

"It is true, but I kept hoping the thing would die of itself or that the friar would come to his senses again, or that he would leave that convent, as it often happens to these friars, who are one day here and another day there; and that then it would be all over. But——"

"Well I must settle the affair now."

"That's what I have thought. I have said to myself,—my uncle with his penetration, and with his authority, he will know how to prevent any scandal, and save at the same time the honor of Rodrigo, which in fact is his own. This friar, said I, is always talking about the cordon of Saint Francis, but to make a good use of it, it is not necessary to have it always around your own waist. My uncle has a hundred ways that I know nothing of. I know the provincial father, as is very proper, has the greatest deference for him, and if my uncle should think it an expedient plan to procure a change of air for the friar, with two words ——"

"Leave that thought to those it belongs to, if you please, sir," said the count uncle rather snappingly.

"True, sir," said Attilio, with a shake of his head, and a smile of compassion for himself. "I am not a person to give counsel to your excellency, but it is the extreme anxiety I have for the reputation of our house that makes me talk. I fear also I may have erred in another particular," he continued with a thoughtful look, "I am afraid I may have prejudiced Rodrigo in the opinion of my uncle. I should not be at peace if I was the cause of your thinking that Rodrigo does not entertain that reliance, and that submission, which his duty to you, sir—and you may believe, that in this particular case——"

"Come, come, how can you do any thing to prejudice one another? You will always be good friends, until one of you gets a little judgment. You are always getting into some wild scrape or other, and then you come to me to set them right; you—you will make me say something extravagant—you give me more to think about, than——" And here he swelled out, "All these blessed affairs of state."

Attilio, with a few more excuses, promises, and compliments, took his leave, accompanied with a "have a little judgment," which was the usual formula of dismission of the count uncle to his nephews.

CHAPTER XIX.

If any one seeing a bad weed in an ill cultivated field, wild sorrel, for instance, should be anxious to discover whether it sprung from seed ripened in the same field, or had been brought there by the wind, or dropped there by the birds, would never, however much he might reflect upon it, come to a conclusion. In like manner we are unable to tell, whether the resolution of the count uncle to make use of the provincial father to cut this knot in the best way, sprung from the bottom of his own brain, or from the hint Attilio gave him. Certain it is that Attilio did not let it drop by chance, and although he might well expect that the jealous vain glory of the count uncle, might take umbrage, at a suggestion so palpably made, at any rate he determined to let out a little flash of lightning before the idea of his scheme, that he might see the road to it, which he wished him to travel upon On the other hand the plan fell so completely in with the notions of the count uncle, and was so appropriate to the circumstances of the case, that without a suggestion from any one, it is very likely he would have thought of it and adopted it. Here was a war openly declared, and the matter was whether his nephew was to have the worst of it, a point most essential for that reputation of power he had so much at heart. The satisfaction his nephew might take into his own hands, would have proved a remedy worse than the evil, a complete hot bed of difficulties; and this must be prevented at any cost, and without losing time. If he should lay his commands upon him to leave his villa immediately, he would not have obeyed him: and if he had done so, it would have been yielding the ground, and an open retreat made by his house

before a convent. Orders, legal force, scarecrows of that kind, were of no value with such an adversary as they had to contend with. The regular as well as the secular clergy, enjoyed a complete immunity from all laical jurisdiction, not only in their persons, but also in their habitations. All that could be done against such an adversary was to try to remove him, and the way to accomplish that was through the provincial father, who had the power to send their enemy away or let him remain.

Between the provincal father and the count uncle there was an acquaintance of some standing; they saw each other seldom, but when they did meet it was with great demonstrations of friendship, and extravagant offers of service. It is sometimes easier to make a good bargain with a person who is placed over a great many individuals, than with any one of them, for he can see nothing but his own cause, be moved by nothing but his own passions, and cares for nothing but the point he is aiming at: whilst the other has the scope of a hundred contingencies and interests, sees a hundred difficulties that must be avoided, a hundred things to preserve, and is able thus to go a hundred ways to work.

Having well considered every thing, the count uncle one day invited the provincial father to dinner, where he found a number of distinguished guests brought together with great refinement of selection. Men of rank, the name of whose houses alone was a title of distinction, and whose physiognomy bore a certain degree of native confidence, and lordly disdain; men who when talking of high matters in familiar terms, succeeded, even when they did not do it on purpose, with impressing upon their auditors an idea of superiority and power. Some clients too attached to the house from hereditary devotion, and to the master by the servitude of a whole life, and who beginning from the soup to say yes to every thing, with their mouths, their eyes, their ears, their heads, with their whole body, and with all their souls, had, when the dessert came on the table, brought themselves to the point of not remembering how no was pronounced.

During the dinner, the count turned the conversation upon the topic of Madrid. There are divers roads that lead to Rome, but he made every possible road lead to Madrid. He spoke of the court, of the Count Duke, of the ministers, of the family of the governor, of the bull fights, which he could describe very well, because he had been very advantageously placed for seeing them: he spoke of the Escurial also of which he was able to give a minute account, as a servant of the Count Duke had taken him through every hole and corner of it. For some time the company, like an audience, was attentive to him alone, but at length got into separate colloquies: he than began to tell other fine stories, in confidence, to the provincial father, who was seated by his side, and who let him talk on. But at a certain point he gave a turn to the discourse, he dropped Madrid, and from court to court, from dignity to dignity, got to talk about cardinal Barberini, who was a capuchin, and brother to the reigning Pope Urban the eighth. The count uncle was now obliged to let the other talk a while, and to listen, and finally to remember that every body in this world were not obliged to play the second fiddle to him. Having risen from table he requested the provincial father to accompany him to another room. Two important personages, two gray beards, two consummate tacticians, were now front to front. The magnifico made the very reverend father seat himself, and having also taken a seat, began:

"On account of the friendship between us, I have thought of speaking to your paternity of an affair that mutually concerns us, and that it will be better to settle between us, without letting it take another course, that might—and therefore, in perfect sincerity, I will say what it is about, and I am quite sure that in two words we can arrange it. Tell me, in your convent of Pescarenico, is there not one father Christopher ——?"

The provincial father nodded assent.

"Will your paternity tell me frankly, like a friend—this subject—this father—I do not know him personally, although I know a great many of the capuchin fathers, men of worth, zealous, prudent, humble—I have been a friend of the order ever since I was a boy—but—in every family that is rather numerous—there is always some one, that has got a head—and this father Christopher, I know from certain circumstances that he is a man—rather—prone to get into disputes—that he has not all that prudence, all that consideration—I should judge he must have given your paternity some anxiety more than once."

—I understand—here is something or other going on,—thought the provincial to himself. —It is my fault—I knew very well that blessed father Christopher was just a subject to travel about from pulpit to pulpit, and not a man to leave six months in one place, especially in the country convents.—

"Indeed," he began, "I am extremely sorry to hear that your magnificence entertains such an opinion of father Christopher, for, as far as I know, he is a religious person—exemplary inside in the convent, and highly esteemed out of it."

"I understand very well, your paternity necessarily—but, truly as a sincere friend, I wish to inform you of a matter you ought to be acquainted with; and if indeed it was already known, I might without failing in respect, allude to certain consequences—possible that—I say no more. This father Christopher, we know to have protected a man who belongs to those parts, a man—your paternity will have heard him spoken of, he that escaped with so much scandal from the hands of justice, after having done things, that terrible Saint Martin's day,—things—that Lorenzo Tramaglino."

Ha, ha! thought the provincial, and then said, "This is quite new to me, but your magnificence knows very well that one part of our office is precisely to go in search of those who stray, to bring them back to the fold."

"That is right; but there are certain ways of dealing with such people, that; these are thorny matters, delicate affairs—" and here instead of puffing and swelling his cheeks out, he drew in his lips and as much air as he usually blew out, and continued, "I have thought it right to give your excellency this hint, because if ever—it might be that some complaint might be made at Rome—I know nothing—and there might come from Rome—"

"Your magnificence is very kind in giving me this counsel, but I feel certain that if inquires should be made into this affair, that it will be found that father Christopher has had nothing to do with this man, but in the way of directing him how to conduct himself. I know father Christopher."

"Certainly, your excellency must know better than me what sort of a person he was in his day, and the affairs he was concerned in when he was a young man."

"It is the glory of our habit, count, that a man whom the world has had occasion to talk about, should, notwithstanding this, become so entirely changed: for since father Christopher has belonged to our order—"

"I wish to believe it with all my heart, I wish to believe it; but sometimes—as the proverb says—the dress does not make the monk."

The proverb did not exactly fit, but the count had substituted it in the place of another that crossed his mind, that the "wolf changes his skin but not his viciousness."

"I have some information," he went on, "some indications—"

"Does your magnificence positively know," said the provincial, "that this religious person has committed any breach of duty—we all may err—do me the favor to inform me if it is so. I am a superior, unworthily, but I am made so expressly to correct and remedy such irregularities."

"I will tell you; together with the unpleasant circumstance of the countenance which this father has given to the person I mentioned, there is another very disagreeable matter, and which might—but between us two, we can arrange every thing at once. This father Christopher, as I was saying, has undertaken to embroil himself with my nephew, Don Rodrigo."

"Indeed I am very sorry at this! extremely sorry, indeed I am."

"My nephew is young and hot; he feels his consequence, and is not accustomed to be provoked."

"It shall be my duty to inform myself correctly of this fact. As I have already said to your magnificence, who with your great knowledge of the world, and with your equity, knows these things better than myself, we are all flesh, all subject to err; as much on one side as on the other, and if our father Christopher has erred."—

"Your paternity will see that these are things, as I was saying, to settle between ourselves, to bury here, if they are too much stirred up, all the worse. You know how these things arise; contests of this kind often spring from some trifling matter, and keep getting worse, getting worse. If we try to get to the bottom of them, we either lose our labor or create a hundred other difficulties. Calm them down, stop them at the beginning, very reverend father, stop them, calm them. My nephew is a young man, the friar, from what I hear, has all the spirit, the—inclinations of youth, and it is our business who have years on our shoulders—too many of them, very reverend father—it is our business to find common sense for these young men, and to smooth over their irregularities. Luckily we are in time to do it, the affair has made no noise, it is still a good case of *principiis obsta*. We must separate the fire from the straw. Sometimes a man who does not succeed, or who is the cause of inconvenience in one place, succeeds to a charm in another place. Your paternity knows very well how to find a convenient niche for this friar. There is also the other circumstance, that he may possibly have some distrust of the person with whom—he may be very glad to be removed, and so by placing him in some convent at some distance, we undertake one journey and two good offices, every thing accommodates itself, or to express it better, nothing is wasted."

This conclusion, the provincial father was looking for from the beginning of the interview. Ah!—thought he to himself—that is what you are wanting to bring me to. It is the old matter, when a poor friar is at variance with any of you, or with one of you, or gives umbrage, immediately without inquiring whether he is in the right or the wrong, the superior has to set him on his travels.

When the count ceased to speak and sent out a great puff with his breath, that was equal to a full stop, "I comprehend exactly," said the provincial, "what your magnificence means to say, but before a step is taken——"

"It is a step and it is not a step, very reverend father, it is a natural thing, a common thing; and if we don't come to this determination, and that directly, I foresee a mountain of disorders, an iliad of woes. Any thing very rash—I should not think my nephew would—I am here—and he would not—but at the point where the affair is, if we don't cut it short without losing time by one neat blow, it will not be possible to stop it, to keep it secret,—and then it will not be my nephew only—we shall rouse a wasp's nest—our house—as you know—has extensive——"

"Very, indeed!"

"Your excellency understands me; men that have got blood in their veins, and who in this world pass for something. Then punctilio arises, it becomes a common affair, and after that—even those who are friends to peace—It would really go to my very heart, to

be obliged—to find myself—I, who have always had such a predilection for the capuchin friars—! Those fathers, to do good—as they do with such edification of the public—want peace, they dont wan't quarrels, they want to be in harmony with—and then they have connections too, and these bad punctilios, if they are permitted to get ahead, extend, ramify, penetrate—the whole world gets divided. I myself am in that blessed sort of position, that obliges me to sustain a certain decorum,—His excellency—my colleagues,—every thing becomes a party affair—especially with that other circumstance—Your paternity knows how such things work."

"Truly," said the provincial father, "father Christopher is a preacher, and I had already entertained some thoughts—at this very moment I have been requested—but again at this precise moment it might look like a punishment, and a punishment before any proof had been exhibited——"

"No punishment at all! not at all, a prudent foresight, an arrange of mutual convenience, merely to prevent the sinister consequences—I have done."

"Between you count and myself, the thing is exactly so, I comprehend. But, the affair being as it was related to your magnificence, it is impossible I say, but that it must have transpired somewhat in the country. In all places, there are a set of mischief makers, and curious malicious persons, who take a delight in seeing the nobles and the religious orders upon bad terms with each other, and they will talk and make a noise about such things. Every one has his own decorum to preserve; and as to myself, as superior—unworthy—I have an express duty in charge—the honor of the habit—it is not my affair—it is a deposit respecting which—Your nephew, since he is so warm in the affair, as your magnificence says, might take the thing as a satisfaction offered to himself, and—I don't mean that he would boast and make a triumph of it, but—"

"Your paternity must be joking with me? My nephew is a cavalier of some consideration in the world—according to his rank and right; but with me he is only a boy, and will do exactly what I shall prescribe him to do. I will tell you more, my nephew shall know nothing about it. What reason is there for us to say any thing about it? They are matters between us two, as between good friends, and every thing is to be kept quiet. Give yourself no thought about it. I ought to be accustomed to be discreet." Here he gave a puff. "As to the idle talkers," he continued, "what have they got to say? It is a very common thing for a religious man to go from one place to another to preach! And then, we who are on the look out—we who foresee matters—we who ought—must not we look after these talkers too?"

"Still, with a view to prevent them, it would be as well upon this occasion if your nephew was to make some demonstration, to give some open mark of friendship, of deference, not on our account, but for the order."

"Surely, surely, that is right—but there is no occasion for it; I know that the capuchins are always treated in a respectful manner by my nephew. He does it from inclination, it is a family feeling, and then he will be glad to do what is agreeable to myself. As to the rest—in this affair—some thing still more marked—it is very just. Leave it to me, very reverend father, I will order my nephew—that is, it will be proper to insinuate it in a prudent way, so that he may not be aware of what has passed between us. There is no occasion you know to put a plaster on where there is no wound. And as to what we have concluded, the sooner it is done, the better. And if the place was a good distance off, to remove every possible chance."

"I have been solicited precisely to send a person to Rimini, and perhaps, without any other cause, I might have cast my eyes upon——"

"Very opportune, very opportune indeed! And when?"

"Why, since the matter is to be done, it will be done directly."

"Directly, directly, very reverend father, better to day than tomorrow;" and rising from his seat, "and if I and my relations can be of any service to our good fathers, the capuchins——"

"We have had proofs of the kindness of your house," said the provincial father, rising also, and moving towards the door, behind his conqueror.

"We have extinguished a spark," said the latter, proceeding slowly "A spark, very reverend father, that might have been the cause of a conflagration. Between good friends, a few words settle great matters."

Having reached the room they had left, he threw the folding doors wide open, and insisting upon the provincial father's entering first, they again rejoined the company.

In the management of an affair the count uncle was accustomed to use much study, much art, and many words, and they produced corresponding effects. In fact the colloquy we have described, procured friar Christopher a journey on foot from Pescarenico to Rimini, a walk of no small magnitude.

A capuchin arrived one evening at Pescarenico from Milan with a despatch for the father guardian. In it was the order for father Christopher to go to Rimini, to preach during lent. The letter to the guardian instructed him to hint to the friar that he must abandon all thoughts of any matter he might have engaged himself in, in the country he was about to leave, and not maintain any correspondence with it; the friar who was the bearer of the despatch was to be his companion during the journey. The guardian said nothing that evening, but in the morning he called for brother Christopher, showed him the letter requiring his obedience, told him to get his bask-

et, his staff, his sudario,* and his girdle, ready immediately to begin his journey with the father companion who had presented himself.

What a stroke for our friar? Renzo, Lucia, Agnes, rushed to his mind, and he almost exclaimed to himself, "Oh, God, what will these helpless creatures do, when I am no longer here? But soon raising his eyes to heaven, he accused himself of want of faith, of believing that he was necessary to accomplish anything. He crossed his hands upon his breast in sign of obedience, and bowed his head before the father guardian, who taking him aside, communicated to him, with some advice from himself, the other part of his instructions. Brother Christopher went to his cell, took his basket, placed within it his breviary, his quaresimal, and his bread of pardon. He then girded his loins with a scourge made of skin, took leave of the monks who were in the convent, presented himself as a last act to receive the benediction of the father guardian, and with his companion took the road prescribed to him.

We have said that Don Rodrigo, more determined than ever to bring his enterprise to a conclusion, had resolved to seek the assistance of a terrible man. Of this personage we can neither give the surname, the name, the title, nor even a conjecture about them. What makes this the more strange is, that we find a great many notices of him in the printed books of that time. That it is the same person, the facts leave no sort of room to doubt; but there appears a studied effort to avoid mentioning his name, as if it might burn the pen, and the hand of the writer. Francesco Rivola, in his life of the Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, having to speak of this man, says, "A nobleman as powerful by his riches, as he was noble by birth," without adding more. Guiseppe Ripamonti, who in the fifth book of the fifth decade of his Storia Patria, enters into more detail, calls him, "one, this man, that man, that personage." "I will notice," says he, in his pure latin, which we translate as well as we are able, "the case of one who being amongst the very first of the great men of the city, had fixed his residence at a villa, and there making himself secure through the crimes he committed, held all sentences, the judges, the magistrature, and the sovereignty, in contempt. Living upon the extreme confines of the State, he led an independent life; the receiver of banished men, himself having been banished for a time, and returned afterwards." From this writer we shall take other passages by and by, which go precisely to confirm and illustrate the narrative of our anonymous author, with which we now proceed.

To do that which was forbidden by the public decrees, or opposed by any force whatever, to be the arbiter, the master in other people's affairs, without any other motive but a passion for controlling every thing; to be feared by all, and to be assisted by the very men, who were accustomed to have their own behests executed by others; such had been at all times, the principal passion of this man. From his youth, at the exhibition and noise of so many overbearing acts, so many agitations, so many quarrels; at the sight of so many tyrants, he experience a mixed sentiment of indignation and impatient envy. Young, and residing in the city, he let no occasion pass, indeed sought for them, to oppose himself to the leaders of this class, to humble them, to force them to contend with him, or to seek his friendship. Superior to the greater part of them in riches and dependants, and perhaps to all in boldness and fortitude, he forced many to withdraw their pretensions of rivalry, many he treated very roughly, and many became his friends. Not friends upon an equality, but only whilst they conformed in their conduct, to his insolent and superb spirit; subordinate friends, who professed to be inferior to himself, and who were contented to be placed at his left hand.

In fact, however, he became a sort of instrument of theirs, for they never failed in their enterprises to ask for the aid of such an auxiliary as he was, and if he had drawn back, his reputation would have suffered, falling short of what he had assumed to be; so that, what on his own account, and what on account of others, he committed so many crimes, that neither his name, nor connexions, nor his friends, nor his audacity being sufficient to sustain him against the public outlawries, and against so many powerful hatreds, he was compelled to submit, and to leave the state. I imagine it is to this circumstance that a remarkable passage in Ripamonti refers. "Once when he had to leave the country, the secrecy, the respect, and the timidity he observed, were after this fashion. He went through the city on horseback, with a train of dogs, to the sound of trumpets; and passing by the palace where the count resided, he left with the guards a message for the governor, replete with the vilest insolences."

During his absence his practices were not discontinued, nor his correspondence with the friends we have spoken of, and who continued their connection with him, interrupted. We translate literally from Ripamonti, "In hidden league of atrocious counsels, and the most dreadful undertakings." It appears also that besides these, he committed in other places, some terrible deeds, respecting which the same historian speaks with a misterious brevity, "some foreign princes too availed themselves often of his aid in some slaughter of importance to them, to be perpetrated, and frequently he had sent to him from a distance a reinforcement of ruffians to serve under his orders."

At length, (after how long it is not known) either the outlawry was removed, by some powerful intercession, or audacity stood in the place of every permission, and he returned home, not however to Milan, but to a castle be-

* A winding sheet, possessed by every capuchin.

longing to him of which he had the fief, upon the confines of the Bergamasc territory, which, as every one knows, was at that time, under the Venetian dominion, and there he fixed his residence. "The place," I quote yet from Ripamonti, "was an office of bloody mandates, his servants were all outlaws and murderers, neither his cook nor scullion could be dispensed from having committed homicide, the hands of the boys were steeped in blood." Besides this fine domestic family, he had, as the same historian affirms, another composed of similar subjects, dispersed about, and quartered as it were in various parts of the two states, upon the edge of which he lived, holding them always ready to his orders.

All the petty tyrants for a considerable circle around him, had been compelled, some upon one occasion, and others upon another, to choose between the friendship and the hostility of this extraordinary and master tyrant. But those who at first had attempted to offer any resistance to him, had succeeded so ill, that no one was heard of disposed to try the experiment again. Nor could any who attended to nothing but their own affairs, and who, as the saying is, kept themselves to themselves, remain independent of him. A messenger would arrive to intimate that such an undertaken must be desisted from, that such a debtor must not be molested, and to communications of that nature, it was necessary to answer yes or no. When a party, with a sort of vassal homage, left to his arbitrament any affair whatever, the other party had the hard choice either to be satisfied with his decision, or to declare him their enemy, a state of things equivalent to the third stage of a consumption. Many, who had been wronged, had recourse to him to do them justice; many had recourse to him again who had not been wronged, to secure his patronage, and to shut up all approach to their adversary; both these classes became in a more especial manner his dependents. Sometimes it fell out, that an oppressed and feeble individual, trampled upon, and embittered by some powerful person, flew to him; and then taking the part of the oppressed, he would force him to desist, to repair the wrong, and even descend to excuse himself; or refusing, he would crush him to nothing, and compel him to leave the place where he had tyrannized, or make him at length pay a more expeditious and terrible penalty. In such cases, that name so feared and so abhorred, had been blessed for a moment; for I will not call it justice, but such a remedy, or reparation of any kind, in the circumstances of the times, was not to be looked for from any other authority or force, either private or public. More frequently, and indeed generally, his power was the minister of iniquitous determinations, of atrocious vengeances, of outrageous capriciousness. But these very different uses of his power, produced but one effect, that of impressing upon the minds of others, a strong idea of how much he was capable both of conceiving and executing in spite of equity and iniquity, those two considerations which oppose so many impediments to the will of man, and which so frequently induce him to retrace his steps. The fame of those ordinary tyrants was pretty much confined to the limited region of country, where they usually or very frequently committed their enormities; every district had its own, and they resembled each other so much, that there was no inducement whatever for people to trouble themselves about any, the weight of whose villanies did not fall exactly upon themselves. But this man's fame was diffused through every corner of the Milanese, every where his life was the subject of popular stories, and his name was significant of something extravagantly powerful, dark and fabulous. The suspicion that every where was entertained of his colleagues and cutthroats contributed to keep alive the recollection of him. It is true they were only suspected, for who would openly profess a dependance on such a man? But every tyrant could be one of his colleagues, every villain one of his instruments, and this very uncertainty itself made the opinion of the thing still more vast, and the terror of it still more deep. And whenever any unknown ruffians were observed more hideous than usual, whenever any enormity was committed of which the author could not be guessed at first, the name of this man was murmured forth, who, thanks to the blessed circumspection of our writers, we are compelled to call the Un-named.

From the horrid castle of this man, to the palace of Don Rodrigo, it was not more than seven miles; and this last, scarcely become a master and a tyrant, could not but perceive that living at so short a distance from this personage, it was not possible to follow that profession, without either coming to a contest with him, or acting in concert. He had therefore offered himself, and had become his friend, as all the others had done. He had rendered him more than one service, (the manuscript adds no more) and every time had received promises of reciprocal aid, whenever a conjuncture should arrive. He was very careful however to conceal this friendship, or at least not to let it appear of how close a nature it was. Don Rodrigo certainly wanted to play the tyrant himself, but not the savage tyrant: the trade was to him a means, not an end. He was desirous of living freely in the city, of enjoying his comforts, his promenades, the honors of civil life; and for this reason it was necessary for him to have some consideration for his connections, to cultivate friendships with respectable persons, to have a hand in the balance of justice, so that he might when it was necessary weigh it down in his own favor, or put it out of the way, or upon occasion let it fall upon the head of some one, and thus more easily settle an affair than by private violence. An open intimacy then, indeed we may call it a league, with so notorious a per-

son, an open enemy of the public authority, certainly would not have consisted with the standing he wished to maintain with others, and especially with the count uncle. If the intimacy could not be altogether concealed, it might pass off as an indispensable thing to a man whose enmity was too dangerous, and thus be excused by necessity: for those whose duty it is to have the laws observed, when they have not the inclination or the means to discharge that duty, consent at length that others, up to a certain point, may take care of themselves as they can, and if they do not expressly consent to it, at least they shut one eye upon the fact.

One morning Don Rodrigo went out on horseback, with his hunting train, with a small escort of ruffians on foot, Griso at the stirrup, and four others behind, and took his way to the castle of the Un-named.

CHAPTER XX.

The castle of the Un-named was advantageously placed over a dark and narrow valley, at the top of a hill that jutted from a sharp ridge of mountains, it is difficult to say whether it was joined to or separated from them by a heap of mounds and steeps, and by a labyrinth of caves and precipices, as well in the rear, as on the flanks: on the side fronting the valley was the only practicable approach, a slope somewhat sharp, but level and continuous, with some pasturage on the top; at the skirts below it was cultivated and had a few habitations. The bottom of the valley was a bed of rocks, over which, as the season was dry or wet a sort of torrent ran, which was the boundary of the two States. The opposite hills, which formed the other side of the valley, had also a slope gently inclined and cultivated, but it was not extensive; the remainder was constituted of rude rocks and crags, abrupt declivities, naked and without any paths, save where a few bushes were growing in the fissures, and on the ridges which separated them.

From the top of this infamous strong place, its savage master, like an eagle from his bloody nest, could command the whole space around, wherever human footsteps could attain; above him, the tread of no one could be heard. At the turn of his eye, he could look into every part of his abode, the declivities, the bottom and the roads which were opened in it. That with its angles and windings which ascended to his terrible domicile, in its whole serpentine course, could be seen by any one looking down from the windows; from the loop-holes, the master could at his ease count the steps of any one who was approaching, and observe him a hundred times. And if the most powerful troop should venture to assault it, with the garrison of Bravo's he kept there, he could fell numbers of them to the ground, or tumble them to the bottom of the valley, ere one could reach the top. As to the rest, no one was daring enough—to say nothing of the height—to venture into the valley, not even when on a journey, without he was on friendly terms with the master of the castle. Any birri who dared to show himself, would have been treated exactly as spies are when caught in camp. Tragical stories were told of the last who had made attempts of that kind, but they were already old stories; not one of the young people of the valley remembered having seen one of that race there, either alive or dead.

Such is the description our anonymous gives us of the place, saying nothing of its name; and, indeed, to leave no traces by which we may discover it, he says nothing of the journey of Don Rodrigo, but launches him at once in the midst of the valley, at the foot of the hill, just where the tortuous and difficult ascent to the castle began. There was an inn at this place, which might as well have been called a guard house. An old sign which was hanging above the door, had a sun full of rays painted on both sides: but the public voice, which sometimes repeats names as it is taught, sometimes shapes them after its own fancy, called this inn by no other name but Malanotte.*

At the trampling of a horse which drew near, a sort of wretch of a lad appeared at the door, well armed with daggers and pistols, and giving a glance, ran in to inform three ruffians, who were seated at a table playing with some dirty and curled up cards. The man who appeared to be their head, rose, went to the door, and recognizing one of his master's friends, bowed. Don Rodrigo, returning the salute very politely, asked him if his master was at the castle, and this corporal of scoundrels having answered that he believed he was, he dismounted from his horse, and threw the reins to Tiradritto,† one of his train. He then took his fowling piece from his shoulder, and gave it to Montanarolo,‡ as if to lighten himself of a useless load in going up the hill, but in fact, because he knew very well no one was permitted to carry arms to the castle. He then took from his pocket, a few livres, and gave them to Tanabuso,§ saying to him, "The rest of you will wait here for me, and make yourselves merry in the meantime with these fine fellows." He next gave the corporal a few crowns of gold, telling him to keep one half for himself, and to divide the rest amongst his companions; this being done he began the ascent, taking Griso along with him, who had also deposited his gun at the inn. In the meantime the three abovementioned Bravo's and Squinternotto,‖ who was the fourth, (pretty names these, to preserve with such care)

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* Bad night. † Good aim. ‡ Highlander.
§ Hollow den. ‖ Disconcerted.

remained with the three belonging to the Un-named, and with the wretched boy that had been brought up to the gallows, to game, to drink, and to relate stories about their own prowess.

Another rascally bravo of the Un-named, who was going up, soon after joined Don Rodrigo, looked at him, knew him, and went on in company, and thus spared him the annoyance of telling his name, and of giving account of himself to others whom they might meet on the road, and to whom he was unknown. Having reached the castle, and entered it, leaving Griso however at the gate, he was conducted through a labyrinth of obscure corridors, and through halls, with their walls covered with muskets, sabres, and halberts, and in every one of which, there was a bravo on guard; and after being made to wait some time, he was admitted into the room where the Un-named was.

Returning the salutation of Don Rodrigo, he rose to meet him, and looked at him from top to bottom, especially examining his hands and face, a custom so habitual with him, that he observed it almost involuntarily with all who came, even if they were his oldest and most proved friends. His person was tall, he looked dried up, and was bald. At first sight that baldness, the few gray hairs that he had left, and the furrows on his countenance, made him look as if he had advanced far beyond the three score years he had scarcely reached: his deportment and his movements, the poignant austerity of his lineaments, and a deep fire that sparkled from his eyes, indicated a liveliness of body and mind that would have been extraordinary even in a young man.

Don Rodrigo told him that he came for advice and aid, that he was engaged in a difficult undertaking, from which his honor did not permit him to withdraw, that the promises of the man who never pledged himself too far nor in vain, were remembered by him, and then proceeded to explain to him the infamous perplexity in which he was, how to act. The Un-named, who already had heard something of the affair, but in a confused way, listened attentively, such stories being to his taste, and because a name was implicated in this, well known, and most odious to him, that of brother Christopher, the open enemy of tyrants, both in word and deed, wherever he could be. The narrator then began to magnify the difficulties of the undertaking, the distance of the place, a monastery, the *Signora*. At this, the unnamed, as if a demon concealed within him, had commanded him to do so, immediately interrupted him, saying that he took the enterprize into his own hands. He took down the name of our poor Lucia, and dismissed Don Rodrigo, saying, "in a short time you will receive from me information of what you ought to do."

If the reader remembers that wretch Egidio, who dwelt near the monastery where Lucia had sought an asylum, he must now learn that he was one of the most confidential accomplices in villany, that the Un-named had, and this was the reason why he had so immediately and resolutely pledged his word. Still, almost the instant he was alone again, he felt, I will not say penitent, but angry at having given a pledge. For some time past he had begun to experience, if not remorse, a sense of weariness at his own villanies. They had accumulated to so frightful a number, that his memory at least, if not his conscience, took the alarm at every new crime he committed, for it brought them before his mind with a feeling that they were both painful and too many; it was like adding to the weight of a load that was already almost intolerable. That kind of repugnance which accompanied his first crimes, but which he had conquered, and which was almost entirely subdued, was again beginning to make him feel its influence. At that early period the image of that long and boundless future before him, that consciousness of a vigorous vitality, filled his mind with a thoughtless sort of confidence: but now, his thoughts of the future, were precisely what made the past ungrateful to him. To grow old! to die! and then? It is a remarkable thing, that the thoughts of death, which in any danger at hand, in front of the enemy, had once roused his spirits, and infused in them an anger that was full of courage; now, when they came to him, in the silence of night, and amidst the security of his castle, filled him with immediate dread. It was not that death, which an enemy could threaten, himself being mortal; it was not a danger to be repelled with more powerful weapons, or a more ready arm; it came alone, it sprung up from within, perhaps it was yet distant, but every moment brought it nearer; and whilst his soul was painfully struggling to drive away the thought, death was approaching! In his early days, the frequent recurrence of his misdeeds, the perpetual exhibition of violence, vengeance, and homicide, inspiring him with a ferocious emulation, had also served him as a sort of authority to oppose to his conscience: now there gradually re-appeared in his mind, the confused, but terrible idea, of individual judgment, of a reason independent of habit: now, his pre-eminence above the vulgar crowd of murderers, a distinction so infamous, awoke in him at times the feeling of a horrible solitariness. That God of whom he had heard speak, but whom for a long time he had not cared either to deny or to acknowledge, occupied only in living as if there were no such being; now, in certain moments of consternation, produced by no immediate cause, of terror without present danger, he appeared to hear call out within him, "I exist notwithstanding." In the first fervor of his passions, the law that he had heard announced in his name, had appeared odious to him; now, when his mind unexpectedly reverted to it, in despite of himself, his reason told him it was a thing that must be fulfilled.

Still he never permitted these emotions to appear, either in words nor deeds, he buried them deeply, and masked them over with the semblance of a more intense ferocity; in this way he sought too to hide them from himself, to stifle them, envying (since he could not annihilate nor forget) those days in which he could perpetrate crimes without feeling remorse, having no solicitude but for their success: he made every effort to revive them, to lay his grasp once more upon his ancient entire, bold, imperturbable will, to convince himself that he was still the same man.

Thus upon this occasion, he had instantly pledged his word to Don Rodrigo, to close the entrance to every kind of hesitation. But scarce had he taken his leave, feeling that resoluteness which he had called up to promise, becoming weak again, and that thoughts were gradually springing up in his mind, which tempted him to break his word, and which would have led him to sink himself in the estimation of his friend, of one who was but a secondary accomplice—to cut short the painful struggle, he called for Nibbio, one of the most expert and desperate instruments of his enormities, and the man whom he made use of in his correspondence with Egidio. With a resolute look he ordered him immediately to take to horse, to proceed instantly to Monza, and inform Egidio of the engagement he had contracted, and that he relied upon him for directions and aid to accomplish it.

The fellow returned sooner than he was expected, with the answer of Egidio, that the undertaking was easy and secure: that the Unnamed should immediately send a carriage that was unknown, with two or three Bravo's disguised, and that he, Egidio, would take charge of the rest, and direct the affair. On receiving this information, the Un-named, whatever might be passing in his mind, gave orders in haste to Nibbio himself, that every thing should be arranged accordingly, and that he himself, with two others whom he designated, should constitute the expedition.

If the execution of the horrible service which had been required of him, had depended upon Egidio's personal means, certainly he would not have given such an unequivocal promise. But in that asylum, where every thing appeared to present an obstacle, the atrocious youth possessed a means known only to himself, and that which would have proved the greatest obstacle to any other, was the very instrument he intended to make use of. We have stated that the wretched signora once permitted herself to speak to him, and the reader may have comprehended that this was not the only time, it was only the first step in a life of abomination and blood. The voice of this man, now become imperious, and indeed almost authoritative where crime was concerned, now imposed upon her the sacrifice of the innocent creature who had been placed under her protection.

The proposition was a dreadful one to Gertrude. To lose Lucia by any unforeseen accident, without any fault of hers, would have been felt by her as a misfortune, and a bitter punishment; and now she was enjoined to deprive herself of her by a perfidious piece of treachery, and to convert into a new remorse, the very means she had of expiation. The wretched nun attempted every way to exempt herself from the horrible command, every one except the one which would have been infallible, and which she had in her own power.

Crime is a master both rigid and inflexible, against whom no one can resist, who does not rebel in his heart. Gertrude could not resolve to do this, and she obeyed.

The day was fixed upon, the hour drew near; retired with Lucia in her private parlor, Gertrude caressed her more than usual, and Lucia received her caresses and returned them with increasing attachment; like the lamb, which trembling without fear under the hand of the shepherd whilst feeling its flesh, and gently stroking it down, turns to lick his hands, unsuspecting that the butcher is waiting out of the fold, to whom its shepherd has sold it a moment before.

"I stand in need of a particular service, and you only can render it to me. Many are ready to obey me, but I have no one in whom I can confine. For a very important matter of my own, which I will communicate to you afterwards, I wish to speak instantly, without the loss of a moment, with that father guardian of the capuchins, who conducted you here to me, my poor Lucia; but no one must know that I have sent to seek him. I have no one but you to do this embassy secretly—"

Lucia was frightened at such a request and with her peculiar bashfulness, but not without a strong expression of surprise, urged, in order to excuse herself, such reasons as the signora could understand, and which she ought to have forseen. Without her mother, without an escort, by a solitary road, in an unknown country.—But Gertrude, instructed in an infernal school, showed so much surprise herself, and so much displeasure to discover a reluctance in one whom she had been so benevolent to, and found all these excuses so insufficient.—In full day, a few steps, a road that Lucia had come a few days before; and which, by description, could not be mistaken by any one who had even never seen it!—She said so much that the poor girl, touched with gratitude and shame at the same time, permitted the words to escape from her mouth, "Well, what do you wish me to do?"

"Go to the convent of the capuchins," and here she described the road again, "Have the father guardian called, tell him to come immediately to me, but that he must let no one know I have sent for him."

"But what shall I say to the fattora, who has never seen me go out, and will ask me where I am going?"

[Continued in No. 3.]

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"Try to get out without being seen, and if you don't succeed, say that you are going to such a church, where you have promised to say an orison."

To tell a lie was a new difficulty to poor Lucia, but the signora seemed again so distressed at the repulse, and made her so ashamed of preferring a vain scruple to gratitude, that the poor girl, astounded more than convinced, and above all moved by her words, answered, "Well, I will go, God protect me," and she went.

Gertrude watched her with a steady and troubled eye from the grate, but when she saw her put her foot on the threshhold, as if overcome by an irresistible feeling, she moved her lips, and said, "Hear, Lucia!"

Lucia returned to the grate, but already another thought, one that was accustomed to tyrannize in her breast, had got the ascendency in Gertrude's wretched mind. Affecting not to be satisfied with the instructions she had given her, she repeated the directions for the road Lucia was to take, and dismissed her, saying, "Do every thing as I told you, and return directly."

Lucia got out of the cloisters unobserved, followed the street with her eyes on the ground, kept close to the wall, and with the aid of the directions she had received, and her own recollections, found the gate of the suburb, and passed it. On she went, shrinking within herself, and somewhat trembling, to gain the main road, and soon reached, and recognized it.

The road was then, and is still, somewhat sunk down, like the bed of a river, between two high banks with trees on each side, that extended themselves over it like a bower. Seeing it so solitary, her fear increased, and she quickened her pace, but after a short time she got a little courage again, perceiving a traveling carriage standing still in the road, and near it, before the open door, two travelers who were looking about as if they were uncertain of the road. Being come nearer to it, she heard one of them say, "Here is a good woman who will tell us the road." In fact, when she had got to the carriage, with a manner having more courtesy in it than his countenance warranted, he said to her, "Young woman, could you direct us the road to Monza?"

"Your carriage is turned the wrong way," answered the poor girl, "Monza lies in this direction," and she turned round to point with her finger, when the other fellow (it was Nibbio) seizing her unawares by the waist, lifted her from the ground. Lucia frightened, turned her head round and screamed out. The ruffian put her into the carriage, another who was inside took her, and whilst she was in vain struggling and screaming, placed her on the seat opposite to himself, whilst a third putting a handkerchief over her mouth, prevented her cries. In the meantime Nibbio in haste got also into the carriage, the door was shut, and it set off full drive. The other fellow who had made the perfidious inquiry about Monza, remained in the road, looked carefully around, and perceiving no one, sprung up the bank, and seizing a branch of one of the trees planted on the top, reached it, and entered a copse of oaks, growing along the road for some distance, and concealed himself there, that he might not be seen by the people who might be brought there by the screams. This man was one of the scoundrels in the employment of Egidio: he had watched the gate of the monastery, had seen Lucia come out, had remarked her dress and figure, and had run by a short road to the place where the other fellows were with the carriage.

Who can describe her terror and anguish, or paint what was passing on her mind? She opened her terror-struck eyes, from anxiety to be apprized of her horrible situation, and closed them immediately in dismay at their ruffian like visages. She struggled, but she was held fast, she gathered all her strength, and made an endeavor to get to the door, but two nervous arms held her fast in the back of the carriage, whilst the others kept her still. Every time she was preparing to scream, the handkerchief was applied to her mouth. In the meantime three hellish voices, kept repeating, in as humane a way as they were able to do, "Silence, silence, don't be afraid, we won't hurt you." After some moments, after a struggle of so much anguish, she appeared more tranquil, let fall her arms, her head dropped backwards, her eye-lids scarcely moved, and her eye-balls became fixed. The dreadful visages before her, appeared to be giddily waving about, and to confound themselves into one monstrous horror; the color fled from her cheeks, a cold sweat came over her, and she fainted away. "Come, come, courage," said Nibbio, "Courage, courage," repeated the other villains, but the suspension of every sense prevented Lucia at that moment, from hearing the comfort that issued from their atrocious voices.

"The devil! she seems dead," said one of them, "what if she really is dead?"

"Stuff!" said the other, "it's one of those faintings that women have. I know when I have had to send some one to the other world, whether man or woman, something else had to be done besides this."

"Mind your duty," said Nibbio, "and dont trouble yourself with any thing else. Take the trombones out of the carriage seat, and put them in order, there are always some thieves harboring in the wood we are approaching. Dont keep them in your hand so, the devil! place them behind there, lay them down there, dont you see, she is like a chick in the rain, she can't stand any thing; if she sees real arms, she may die in good earnest. And when she comes to herself again, mind and don't frighten her. Don't touch her unless I motion you to do it, I can hold her without you. And silence, leave it to me to speak."

In the meantime, the carriage, going on at the same pace, entered the wood.

After sometime the poor girl began to come to herself, as from a deep and troubled sleep, and opened her eyes. It was difficult for her at first to distinguish the lurid objects which surrounded her, and to collect her thoughts, at length she remembered her dreadful situation. The first use she made of the return of her feeble strength, was to throw herself towards the door to rush out, but she was prevented, and could only get a momentary glimpse of the savage wildness of the place they were passing through; again she screamed, but Nibbio raising the handkerchief with his rude hand, "Come," said he to her, as softly as he could, "be quiet, it will be better for you, we are not going to hurt you, but if you won't be silent, we must force you to be so."

"Let me go! Who are you? Where are you taking me? Why have you taken me? Let me go! let me go!"

"Dont be afraid, I tell you, you are not a baby, and ought to comprehend that we don't want to hurt you. Don't you see that we could have killed you a hundred times, if we had any bad intentions? Be quiet then."

"No, no, let me go on my way; I don't know you."

"We know you very well."

"Oh, most holy virgin! let me go, for charity's sake. Who are you? Why have you taken me?"

"Because we were ordered to do it."

"Who, who, ordered you?

"Silence!" said Nibbio with a severe look, you must not ask us questions of this kind."

Lucia tried once more to spring suddenly to the door, but seeing it was in vain, she again had recourse to intreaties, and with her face drooping, with the tears running down her cheeks, with her voice interrupted by sobs, with her hands joined before her lips, said, "Oh! for the love of God and the holy virgin, let me go! What harm have I done to you? I am a poor creature that has done you no hurt. What you have done to me, I forgive with all my heart, and I shall pray to God for you. If you also have a daughter, a wife, or a mother, think of what she would suffer in my situation. Remember that we must all die, and that some day you will have to ask God to be merciful to you. Let me go, leave me here; the Lord will teach me how to find the road.

"We can't do it."

"You can't, Oh, sir, why can't you do it? Where are you going to take me? Why——"

"We can't, it is useless; don't be afraid, we won't hurt you, be quiet, and no one will touch you."

Grieved, agonized, frightened, more than ever, from seeing that she could make no impression on them, Lucia turned her thoughts to him who holds the hearts of men in his hands, and who is able, when he pleases, to soften the hardest of them. She shrunk into the corner where she had got, crossed her arms over her breast, and prayed fervently in her heart, and taking her rosary from her pocket, began to tell her beads with more devotion than she had ever done in her life. From time to time, hoping to have obtained the mercy she was seeking for, she again began to entreat them, but it was in vain. Her senses again forsook her, and again she revived to new anguish. But of a truth we have not spirits to describe all that she suffered, our compassion is of too feeling a nature to permit us to do ought but hasten to the conclusion of the journey, which lasted more than four hours, and was succeeded by other hours of anguish, which we shall have to relate. Let us transport ourselves to the castle where the unhappy girl is expected.

The Un-named was expecting her, with solicitude, and an unusual hesitation of mind. A strange thing! He, who with an unperturbed heart had disposed of so many lives, who in so many deeds done by him, had counted as nothing the agonies he had inflicted, except to augment his savage voluptuousness of vengeance, now, respecting the power he exercised over this Lucia, an unknown, insignificant country girl, felt an apprehension, a reluctance, I would almost say a terror. From an elevated window of his castle he had been for some time looking out towards the end of the valley, and at length saw the carriage appear, but with a slow pace, the velocity with which they had traveled, having somewhat abated the activity of the horses; and although, from the distance at which it appeared, it did not look larger than one of those toys that children amuse themselves with, still he knew it at once, and felt his heart beat still stronger. Is she in it?—thought he—what trouble she gives me—I must get rid of her.

And he was about to despatch one of his fellows to meet the carriage and order Nibbio to turn and conduct her to the palace of Don Rodrigo. But an imperious no that spoke to him from the recesses of his mind, prevented him; tormented however with an inclination

to give orders of some kind, and the suspense of waiting for the carriage which was coming on pace by pace, like some piece of treachery, becoming intolerable to him, he ordered an old female of the castle to be called.

This old woman, the daughter of an ancient keeper of the castle, was born in it, and had lived there all her life. What she had seen and heard there from her infancy, had impressed upon her mind, a magnificent and terrible idea of the power of her masters, and the principal maxim she had learnt both from precept and example, was, that obedience was necessary upon all occasions, for they were able both to punish and reward in the highest degree. The idea of duty, deposited like a germ in the hearts of all, and developing itself in hers with sentiments of respect, terror, and servile cupidity, had associated and identified itself with these. When the Un-named, once become master, had begun to make such dreadful use of his power, she experienced at first a kind of shivering repugnance, but also a deeper feeling of submission. In time she got accustomed to what she saw, and what she heard spoken of every day : the potent and unbridled will of such a master was to her a kind of fatal justice. When she grew up, she had married one of his servants, who soon after, being gone on an adventurous expedition, had left his bones on the road, and had left her a widow in the castle. The vengeance which her master soon took for his death, gave her a ferocious sort of consolation, and increased her proud feeling at being under such protection. From that time she seldom stirred out of the castle, and by degrees scarce any ideas of the usages of humanity remained with her, save those she had received there. She had no particular duty to perform, but amongst such a crew of scoundrels, first one and then the other, was employing her, a thing which she detested. Sometimes she had their rags to mend, then to prepare food for those returning from an expedition, oftentimes she had their wounds to dress ; their commands too, their reproaches, and their thanks were accompanied with rude jokes and vulgarities ; old dame was the usual appellative they gave her, the additions to this, which were never wanting, varied according to circumstances, and the humor of the individual. Disturbed in her sloth, and provoked when angry, two dominant passions with her, she sometimes exchanged compliments of this kind with them, in which satan would have recognized more of his own inventions, than in those of her antagonists.

"Dost thou see that carriage below?" said her master to her.

"I see it," answered she, stretching out her meagre chin, and starting her eyes from their sunken cavities, as if she would force them to the edge of their sockets.

"Have a litter got ready instantly, get into it, and have thyself carried down to Malanotte, instantly, without loss of a moment, that thou mayst get there before the carriage, it is coming on there with the pace of death. In that carriage there is—there ought to be—a young girl. If there is, tell Nibbio it is my orders that she be placed in the litter, and that he comes here immediately to me.—Thou wilt get into the litter with her, and when you have reached the castle, take her to thy chamber. If she asks thee where they are taking her, or whose castle this is, be careful not to——"

"Oh!" said the old woman.

"But," continued the Un-named, "keep up her spirits."

"What shall I say to her?"

"What shalt thou say to her? keep up her spirits, I tell thee. Hast thou got to this age without knowing how to encourage others when thou wantest to do so? Hast thou ever felt anguish at heart? Dost thou not know what words give consolation at such moments? Say some of these things to her, find them in the memory of thy own sorrows. Quick, be gone."

As soon as she had left the room he stopped a while at the window with his eyes fixed upon the carriage, which now appeared more distinctly, then looked at the sun which at that very instant was sinking behind the mountains, and cast a glance at the clouds above, which changed from brown to livid fire. He now closed the window, and began to pace the room backwards and forwards with the hurried step of a traveler.

CHAPTER XXI.

The old woman ran to obey, and to issue commands with the authority of that name, which, by whoever it was pronounced, gave a spur to every one in the castle, for it never entered into the thoughts of any one that others would dare to utter it without being authorised to do so. In fact she got to Malanotte a little before the carriage, and seeing it approach she got out of the litter, made signs to the coachman to stop, drew near to the door, and whispered to Nibbio—who put his head out—the will of their master.

Lucia, when the carriage stopped, roused herself and came out of a kind of lethargy. She experienced a new assault of terror, opened her eyes and mouth, and stared. Nibbio now drew back, and the old woman, with her chin on the door, looking at Lucia, said "Come, my young maid, come, my poor young thing, come with me, I have orders to treat you well, and to cheer you up."

At the sound of a female voice, the poor girl experienced some comfort, and a momentary courage, but soon a deeper dread overcame her. "Who are you?" said she, with a trembling voice, looking with astonishment upon the countenance of the old woman.

"Come, come, poor thing," she kept repeating. Nibbio and the other two, supposing from the words and the extraordinary gentle

tone of the old woman, what the intentions of their master were, endeavored, in a kind manner, to persuade the oppressed girl to obey. But she looked out, and although the wild and unknown nature of the place, and the perfect security in which her keepers were, left her no room to hope for succor, still she opened her mouth to scream; but perceiving Nibbio threatening her with his eyes to apply the handkerchief again, she remained silent trembled, resisted, was taken and put in the litter. The old woman got into it after her, Nibbio left the other two fellows to follow it as an escort, and immediatly began the ascent, to obey the call of his master.

"Who are you?" anxiously asked Lucia of the deformed and unknown old hag, "Why am I here with you? Where am I? Where are you taking me?"

"To one who will be kind to you," replied the old woman, "to a great—happy are they to whom he is kind! It is a happy thing for you, a happy thing for you. Dont be afraid, be cheerful, he has commanded me to keep up your spirits. Won't you tell him, eh? that I have tried to give you courage?"

"Who is he? Why, what does he want of me? I don't belong to him. Tell me where I am; let me go; tell these men to let me go, tell them to take me to some church. Oh! you who are a woman, in the name of the virgin Mary——!"

That holy and sweet name, repeated with so much veneration in her early years, and now for so long a period never invoked, perhaps never heard, produced in the mind of the wretched creature who now heard it, a confused, strange, slumbering impression, like the remembrance of light and forms, in the mind of some old person blind from infancy.

In the mean-time, the Un-named, standing at the gate of his castle, looked below, and saw the litter coming up, as he at first saw the carriage, step by step, and before it, at a distance, which he every instant increased, Nibbio hurrying on. As soon as he had reached the top—"Come here," said his master, and going before him entered one of the rooms of the castle.

"Well?" said he, stopping there.

"Every thing happened right," answered Nibbio bowing, "We got our instructions in season, the young woman came at the nick of time, no one upon the place, a single scream which brought no one, the coachman ready, the horses in good order, and no one on the road: but——"

"But what?"

"But—I must tell the truth, I should have liked much better if my orders had been to fire a blunderbuss into her back, without hearing her say a word, or without looking her in the face."

"How? what? what dost thou mean?"

"I mean to say, that the whole time, every minute of the time—she made me feel too much compassion."

"Compassion! What dost thou know of compassion? What is compassion?"

"I never knew what it was so well as this time; compassion is a thing very much like fear, if a man lets it take possession of him, he is no longer a man."

"Let me hear how she acted to move thee to compassion."

"Most illustrious sir! for so long a time—! such weeping, such praying, such looks, and then pale, pale as death, and such sobbing, and then praying again, and such words as she used—"

She shan't stay in this house—thought the Un-named. It was in an unlucky moment I engaged in this affair; but I have promised—have promised. When she is afar off—and lifting his head with an imperious air, he said to Nibbio, "Put thy compassion aside now, mount, take a companion, two if thou likest, and go till thou reachest the residence of that Don Rodrigo, thou knowest whom I mean. Tell him to send immediately, instantly, otherwise—"

But another *no* from the voice within, still more imperious than the last, did not permit him to finish. "No," he exclaimed with a determined voice, as if he were delivering to himself the command of the secret monitor, "no, go repose thyself, and tomorrow—thou shalt execute what I have told thee!"—She has a demon who serves her—he thought, when he was left alone, standing with his arms crossed over his breast, and with his eyes immovably fixed upon a spot on the floor, where the rays of the moon, entering by a high window, depicted a square of pale light checquered by the shade of the thick iron bars, and cut into diamond forms by the small panes of window glass.—Some demon or—some angel who protects her—. Inspire Nibbio with compassion! Tomorrow, tomorrow betimes she shall leave this, she shall go to her destiny, she shall be no more spoken of; and—he continued to himself, with that sort of resolution that a command is given to an intractable boy, knowing he will not obey—and she shall be no more thought of. That animal Don Rodrigo shall not come to trouble me with his thanks—I will not hear her spoken of any more. I have served him because—because I have promised to do so; because—it was destiny in me. But he shall pay me well for this service. Let me see a little—

He was beginning to contrive in his mind some difficult undertaking to impose upon Don Rodrigo as a return, and indeed as a punishment, but again those words began to cross his mind,—compassion in Nibbio!—How has she effected this?—he continued, led on by the thought. I will see her. No, no. Yes, I will see her.

And leaving the room, he went to a small stair case, and softly mounting, he reached the door of the old woman's room, and struck with his foot against the door.

"Who is there?"

"Open,"

The old woman made but three jumps at the sound of that voice, and instantly the noise of removing the fastening was heard, and the door was thrown wide open. The Un-named cast a look into the room, and by the light of a lamp which was burning upon a stand, he perceived Lucia on the floor, drawn up into the farthest corner from the door.

"Who told thee, thou base creature, to fling her on the floor like a bundle of rags?" said he to the old woman, with an angry look.

"She has placed herself just where she liked," answered the old woman, humbly. "I have done all I could to comfort her, she can tell you so, but it is impossible."

"Rise," said he to Lucia, approaching her. But she, into whose alarmed mind, the knock at the door, the opening of it, the sound of his foot-step, and his voice, had carried a still darker and deeper dread, drew herself up still closer into the corner, with her face hid in the palms of her hands, and there remained without motion, save in the trembling that overcame her.

"Rise, I do not mean to hurt you—and I can do you good," he repeated. "Rise," he thundered forth, incensed at having commanded twice in vain. Re-invigorated now by her own terror, the wretched maid threw herself on her knees, and joining her hands together, as if she were before some sacred image, she lifted her eyes up to the face of the Un-named, and dropping them again, said "I am here, kill me."

"I have told you that I do not mean to harm you," replied the Un-named with a gentle voice, examining her features, disturbed by grief and terror.

"Courage, courage," said the old woman, "When he tells you himself he does not mean to harm you."

"And why," said Lucia with a voice, where the tremor of terror was mingled with the confidence given by the despair of indignation, "Why do you make me suffer the pains of hell? What have I done?"

"Have they behaved ill to you? Speak."

"Ill to me! have they not seized me by treachery, by force. Why, why have they seized me? What am I here for? what have I done? In the name of God—"

"God, God," interrupted the Un-named, "always God, those that can't help themselves, who have no strength of their own, are always appealing to this God, as if they knew such a being, What do you pretend by using this word? To make me—?" and he left the phrase unfinished.

"Oh, sir! pretend! What can I, poor creature, pretend to, but that you may be merciful to me. God pardons so many sins for one act of mercy! let me go, for charity let me go! It is not good for any one who has to die, to make a poor creature suffer in this way. You who can command here, tell them to let me go! They have carried me off by force. Put me in that thing again with this woman, and let me be carried to *** where my mother is! Oh, most holy virgin! my mother! my mother! for charity, my mother! perhaps she is not far from here—I saw my mountains as we came! why do you make me suffer? Let them take me to some church, I will pray for you, as long as I live. What will it cost you to say one word? See, see! you are touched with compassion, say one word, say it. God pardons so many things for one act of mercy!"

—Why is not this the daughter of one of those stupid fools that banished me!—thought the Un-named—one of those vile wretches that wished me dead! how I should enjoy her lamentations, and instead of——

"Do not drive away a good inspiration!" she fervidly pursued, reanimated by perceiving some hesitation in the countenance and manner of her tyrant. "If you do not grant me this mercy, the Lord will be merciful to me; he will cause me to die, and there will be an end of my life: but you, perhaps one day even you—but no, no, I will always pray to God to preserve you from all evils. What will it cost you to say one word? If ever you should suffer such distress as I feel—"

"Come, take courage," interrupted the Un-named, with a gentleness that astonished the old woman. "Have I done you any harm? Have I threatened you?"

"Oh, no? I see that you have a good heart, and that you have compassion for this poor creature. If you wished to do it, you might frighten me more than all the others, you might make me die, and instead of that, you have eased my heart a little, may God remember it to you. Complete your work of mercy, set me free, set me free."

"Tomorrow——"

"Oh, set me free now, now—"

"Tomorrow I shall see you again. Come, keep up your courage. Go to rest, you must want refreshment. You shall have some brought to you."

"No, no, I shall die if any one comes in here, I shall die. Take me to some church—God will reward you for it."

"A woman shall bring you something to eat," said the Un-named, and he had scarce uttered the words when he was astonished how such an idea should have come into his head, and how he had been placed in a situation to contrive such a plan merely to comfort a poor little female.

"And thou," he instantly added, "encourage her to eat, put her to rest in thine own bed, and if she wishes thee to sleep with her, do so; otherwise, thou canst sleep for one night on the floor. Cheer her up, I tell thee, keep up her spirits, and give her no occasion to complain of thee."

Having said this, he moved rapidly to the door; Lucia rose and ran to detain him, to entreat him again, but he was gone. "Oh, poor me! shut the door, shut it directly." And as soon as she had heard the door close, and the

fastening replaced, sne again crept into the corner where she had been. "Oh, poor me!" she again exclaimed, sobbing, "who shall I entreat now? Where am I? Tell, tell me for charity, who is that gentleman—he who spoke to me?"

"Who he is, eh? who he is? You want me to tell you that. Stop till I tell you indeed. You are become proud, now that he protects you, and you want to be satisfied about every thing, and bring me into difficulties. Ask him himself. If I was to tell you that, I should get none of those kind words he gave you."—I am an old woman, an old woman—she went on, murmuring between her teeth. Hang those young creatures, they always please whether they are crying or laughing, and they are never in the wrong.—But hearing Lucia sob, and the threatening nature of her master's commands returning to her mind, she went to the poor girl in the corner, and stooping down to her, said, with a more composed and humane voice; "Come, I have said nothing bad to you, be cheerful. Don't ask me things I cant answer you, and as to the rest take courage. If you knew only how many people would be happy to hear him talk to them as he has talked to you. Keep up your spirits, by and by we shall have something to eat, and I who understand things, know, from the way in which he spoke that there will be something good, and then you shall lie down, and—you will leave a little corner for me," she added with a repressed rancor.

"I don't want to eat, I don't want to sleep. Leave me here—don't go away, don't go from here!"

"No, no, come," said the old woman, seating herself in an old chair, whence she cast upon the poor girl looks of fear and spite, and then looking at her bed, and worrying herself at the idea of being excluded from it all night, and muttering against the cold. But she comforted herself with the thoughts of supper, and the hope that there would be sufficient for her also. Lucia was not aware it was cold, she was not hungry, she was astounded, and even of her affliction and her terrors she had but a confused sentiment, like the flitting images that are formed in the slumbers of a fever.

She shook when she heard a knock at the door, and raising her frightened countenance, called out, "Who is there? who is there? Let no one come in!"

"Its nothing, nothing, only good news," said the old woman, "It is Martha bringing something to eat."

"Shut, shut, the door," cried Lucia.

"Directly, directly," replied the old woman, and taking a basket from Martha, she dismissed her in haste, and having shut the door, placed the basket upon a table in the middle of the room. She then respectfully invited Lucia to come and partake of the provisions, and using such language as she thought would serve to stimulate her appetite, she broke out into exclamations of the exquisiteness of the food.

"Here were things, that when common people had once got a taste of them, they remembered them for some time! such wine as the master drank with his friends—when any of those particular friends came!—and wanted to be merry. Hem!" But seeing all these allurements were vain, she said, "It is you that won't have any thing, so don't you tell him tomorrow that I did not encourage you. I shall eat something, and there will be more than enough left for you, when you have made up your mind to be wiser, and to obey." Having said this, she went to work in good earnest, and having satisfied herself, she left the seat, and again went to Lucia, and pressed her to eat and to go to rest.

"No, no, I won't have any thing," she answered with a weak and sleepy voice. And then, with renewed vigor, added, "is the door fastened? is it well fastened?" And after looking about, she got up, and with her hands put out before her, with a distrustful pace, she went towards it

The old woman reached it before her, put her hand to the fastening, pulled it, and showed that it was secure, "See now! listen! it is perfectly fast. Are you satisfied now? are you content?"

"Me content? content here!" said Lucia, going to her corner again. "But the Lord God knows that I am here!"

"Come and sleep, what are you doing there lying in a corner like a dog? Was there ever any body before that refused what was good for them, when they could have it?"

"No, no, leave me alone."

"It is you yourself that will have it so. See, I shall leave you plenty of room here, I shall lie down on the edge, I shall be uncomfortable on your account. If you want to come to bed, you know what you have to do. Remember I have asked you a great many times." She then laid herself down, dressed as she was, under the cover lid, and all became silent.

Lucia remained motionless, crouched in the corner, her knees bent up close to her body, her hands on her knees, and her face hid in her hands. She was neither asleep nor awake, it was a rapid succession, a listless flitting of thoughts, fancies, and agitations. Now more herself again, and having a more distinct recollection of the horrors she had seen and suffered in that day, she painfully reflected upon the circumstances of that obscure and formidable reality which now enveloped her: her mind now, borne into a region still more obscure, struggled with those phantasms arising from uncertainty and terror. She remained in this state of agony a long time, and which we prefer to pass rapidly over. At length weakened and exhausted, her cramped limbs relaxed themselves, and she fell down stretched out, remaining for some time in a state resembling sleep. But, all at once, she felt an internal call, and the necessity of being herself, of col-

lecting all her thoughts, of knowing where she was, and how, and why she was there.

A sound reached her ear, it was the slow hoarse breathing of the old woman, she opened her eyes and saw a flickering light appear and disappear by turns, it was the wick of the lamp almost burnt out, and which shot out a tremulous light, and then sank back again; like the advance and retreat of the wave on the shore: a light, which, flying from the objects before it had brought them into relief and given them a distinct color, presented a confused mixture of things to the vision. Soon, however, recent impressions re-appearing in her mind, assisted her to distinguish what appeared confused to her senses. The unhappy girl, roused once more, recognized her prison; all the remembrances of the past horrible day, all the terrors of the future assaulted her at once, this new tranquillity, even after so many agitations, this resting, this being abandoned to herself, all brought a new dread upon her, and she was so overcome by anguish that she wished to die. But at that very moment she remembered that she could still pray; and with the thought, a sudden hope, a new ray of comfort sprung up within her. She took her rosary out again and began to tell her beads, and as the prayer escaped from her trembling lips, her heart felt that her wavering faith was strengthening. All at once another thought crossed her mind, that her prayer would be more acceptable and more certainly heard, if in her desolation she was to make an offering to the Virgin. She thought of what she held most dear, of what she had always most valued, and since in her distress her mind could entertain no feeling but that of dread, nor conceive of any other desire but that of deliverance, she remembered what that was, and resolved to make a sacrifice. Placing herself on her knees, and holding clasped to her breast the hands which held her rosary, she raised her face and eyes to heaven, and said, "Oh, most holy Virgin, you to whom I have recommended myself so many times, and who so often have consoled me! You who have suffered so many griefs and are now so glorious! You who have done so many miracles for the poor in tribulation, aid me! take me out of this danger, take me safe back to my mother; mother of Christ! I make a vow to remain a virgin, to renounce for ever my poor Renzo, and to belong to no one but you."

Having uttered these words, she bowed her head and placed the rosary round her neck; as a sign of consecration, and a safeguard at the same time; as an armor in the new service to which she had now devoted herself. Having seated herself again on the floor, she felt a stronger faith and a more assured tranquillity enter into her soul. That *tomorrow* which the powerful unknown had repeated, came to her mind, and in it she seemed to find a promise of safety. Her senses now fatigued by these conflicting emotions, began to slumber amidst these confiding thoughts, and at length, almost at dawn of day, with the name of her protectress half issuing from her lips, Lucia fell into a sound and perfect sleep.

But there was another in that same castle who would willingly have done the same thing, and could not. Departed, or rather escaped from Lucia, having given orders for her supper, having made his usual visits to certain parts of the castle, always with her image living in his mind, and with her exclamations sounding in his ears, he had hastened to his chamber, shut himself impatiently up there as if he was going to entrench himself against a squadron of enemies, and undressing in haste, he got into bed. But her image, now more present to him than ever, seemed at this very instant to say to him:—Thou shalt not sleep What a silly woman's curiosity has mine been to see her, thought he. That beast Nibbio is right, a man is no longer a man; it is so, he is no longer a man!— I? I am no longer a man. I? What has happened? What the devil has got into me? What novelty is this? Did not I know before that women break out into lamentations. Men do the same thing when they can do nothing else. What the devil, did I never hear a a woman blubber before?

And here, without its being necessary for him to give himself much trouble in looking into his memory, memory of itself presented to him more than one case in which neither prayers nor lamentations had moved him from executing his firm determinations. But the recollection of such enterprizes, instead of giving him the boldness he wanted to execute this, instead of extinguishing that compassion which disturbed him, brought a kind of terror there, and a sort of angry repentance. So much so that it seemed to relieve him to return to that first image of Lucia, against which he had sought to strengthen his courage. "She is still living," he said, "and here; it is not too late. I can still say to her, go, be happy. I can see that face brighten up; I can still say to her, pardon me—pardon me? Me ask for pardon! to a woman? I? Ah! still, if a word, if such a word could comfort me, and could relieve me from a little of this cursed feeling, I would say it. I feel that I should say it. To what am I reduced! I am no longer a man, I am no longer a man! Begone!" said he, afterwards, furiously turning in the bed, which felt so hard to him, beneath that covering which appeared so heavy to him: "begone, these are follies that have crossed my mind at other times, and which have passed away; these will pass away too."

And to drive them off, he began to search in his mind, for some important affair, some one of those matters which were wont to occupy him deeply, that he might turn all his attention to it, but he could find none. Every thing appeared changed to him; what at other times had more strongly stimulated his desires, now had no longer any power over him: passion, like a horse become suddenly restive at a shadow, refused to take another

step. Thinking of the undertakings he had begun, and which were unfinished, instead of being stirred up to complete them, instead of being irritated by obstacles (for anger at this moment would have been grateful to him) he experienced a painful regret, and a dread of the steps he had taken. Time presented itself in the vista before him, devoid of all interest, of all desire, of all action, full only of intolerable remembrances, every hour like the one dragging so slowly on, and so heavily to him. He ranged in his imagination all the desperate men that depended upon him, and did not find a single thing that it was important to him to command their services upon, and even the idea of seeing them again, of finding himself amongst them, was a new burden, which appeared to him both disgusting and troublesome. And if any feat was to be thought of for the next day, some thing or other that was feasible, it was the idea of setting the poor girl at liberty.

I will set her free, yes; as soon as the day has dawned, I will run to her, and will tell her, go, go. I will have her accompanied—And the promise? and the pledge? and Don Rodrigo?— Who is Don Rodrigo?

Like one taken unawares by an unexpected and embarrassing interrogation from his superior, the Un-named immediately thought how he was to answer this which he had put to himself, or rather that now *he* had started into existence so suddenly, and had come to judgment against the old one. Thus he went seeking for reasons, why, almost before he had been asked, he had resolved to take upon himself an engagement to create so much suffering, without motives of hatred, or fear, in a wretched unknown maiden, to serve him: not that he succeeded in discovering reasons which appeared to him now sufficient to excuse the fact, for he could not even comprehend how he had been induced to it. His will, rather than his deliberate resolution, had been the instantaneous movement of a mind obedient to ancient habits, the consequence of a thousand antecedent facts; and the tormented examiner of himself, to give an account of a single fact, was plunging into an investigation of his whole life. Far back, from year to year, from enterprize to enterprize, from blood to blood, from villanies to vallanies; each one re-appeared to his mind conscious and new, separated from the feelings which had made him will and commit them, and with a monstrosity that his feelings at the time had kept out of sight. They were all his own, they were himself; the horror of that thought flashing forth at each of these images, and inseparable from all, increased to desperation. He raised himself in a paroxysm of fury, stretched his arm to the wall at the side of the bed, seized a pistol, cocked it, and——at the moment when he was about to finish an insupportable life, his mind, surprized by a terror, and a solicitude that still survived, plunged into that time which would continue to roll on till time should be no more. He figured to himself with dread his deformed corse, motionless, in the power of the vilest that should survive him; the surprize, the confusion of the castle on the morrow, every thing in disorder, himself without power, without a voice, thrown no one knows where. He thought of the rumors that would be circulated, the conjectures that would be made there, in the neighborhood, at a distance, and of the joy of his enemies. The darkness even, and silence made the idea of death appear still more gloomy and dreadful to him: it seemed to him that he should not have hesitated, if it had been day, if he had been out of his room, and in the face of his people to have thrown himself into some deep pool and have disappeared. Absorbed in these tormenting contemplations, he kept cocking and uncocking the pistol, with a convulsive motion of his thumb, when another thought took possession of him.

If this life to come of which they spoke to me when I was a boy, and of which they still talk, as if it was a certainty, if there is no such thing, if it is only an invention of the priests, what am I going to do? wherefore die? of what consequence is it what deeds I have done? of what consequence? It is madness in me—And if there is a life to come—!

At this doubt, at so great a risk, a despair still more black and insupportable came over him, from which, even with the aid of death, there was no escape. The pistol dropped from his hands, and he remained with his fingers in his hair, his teeth chattering, and trembling in all his members. All at once, the words which he had heard a few hours before, rushed to his mind. God pardons so many things for one work of mercy! Still it was not with those accents of humble entreaty with which they were uttered, that they now came back to him, but in a voice full of authority, and which at the same time encourged a distant hope. It was a moment of relief. He raised his hands from his temples, and in a more composed attitude, turned his mind's eye towards her who had pronounce those words, and considered her, not as his captive, not as a suppliant, but as one in the act of dispensing grace and consolation. Anxiously did he now expect the day, that he might liberate her, that he might hasten to hear from her mouth more words of solace and of life; he thought he would take her himself to her mother—and then? What shall I do tomorrow, the rest of the day? What shall I do the next day? The day after that? And the night? Night, that will return again in twelve hours? Oh! the night! no, no, the night!—And falling again into contemplation of the painful void of the future, he thought in vain of some employment for the time, some way of passing the days, and the nights. Now he proposed to himself to abandon the castle, and to go to distant lands, where his name had been never heard of, but he felt, that he, he himself,

would always be there: again a faint hope sprung up of a return of his ancient courage and his former inclinations, and that this was but the delirium of a moment. Now he dreaded the day, that must exhibit him to his people so miserably changed, now he sighed for it, as if it would even shed a light upon his thoughts.

And lo! exactly at the dawn, but a few moments after Lucia had slept, whilst he was sitting motionless in his bed, an indistinct undulating sound reached his ear that had something of a festive character in it. He listened, and perceived it was a distant festive chiming of bells, and after a while he heard it echoed from the hills, which, from time to time, languidly repeated the harmony, and mingled itself with it. By and by he heard another chiming still nearer, then another, all of a festive character. What rejoicing is this? What are they making merry about? What good fortune has happened? He leapt from his bed of thorns, and throwing on some clothes in haste, he opened one of the windows, and looked out. The mountains were half covered with mist, the sky, more than cloudy, was one universal ash-colored cloud, but the dawn, which kept increasing, showed people hastily moving about in the road at the bottom of the valley; others leaving their houses, all going in the same direction, towards the entrance of the valley, to the right of the castle. The dress also, and the festive manner of the people, could be distinguished.

What the deuce have they got in them? What cause for mirth is there in this wretched country? Where is all that mob going? And having called a Bravo who slept in a contiguous room, he inquired of him the cause of all this movement. This fellow, who knew no more than his master, answered that he would go immediately and get information. The Unnamed remained in the mean time leaning against the window, intent upon the moving spectacle. There were men, women, children, in groups, in pairs, alone; others coming up with those who had got on before, joined them: another one leaving his house, would make a companion of the first he fell in with on the road, and they would go on together, like friends on an appointed journey. Their actions manifestly indicated they were in a hurry, and that the joy was common: and the simultaneous, though not concerted sound of the various peals, some more, some less nigh, and distinct, seemed to represent the general voice of these movements, and the words which could not rise as high as the castle. He looked, and looked, and this more than curiosity increased in his heart to know what could impart so much gladness, and the same inclination to such a variety of people.

CHAPTER XXII.

In a short time the Bravo returned to say, that the preceding day, Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, had arrived at * * *, and would remain there all that day, which was now beginning; and that the news of this arrival having spread all around during the preceding evening, had inspired the people with a desire to go and see this man: they had set the bells a ringing, as well for the pleasure his arrival had given them, as to spread the news. The Un-named, left once more alone, continued to look down into the valley still more thoughtfully. For a man! all in such haste, all so happy, to go and see a man! and still every one of them has got his devil that torments him. But no one, no, not one, has got a devil like mine: no one has passed such a night as I have! What has he about him that he can make so many people happy? A little money to distribute at a venture?—But they are not going there for charity. Some motions and crossings in the air, a few words he will say to them.—Oh! if but that he had any words to console me with! If but—! Why should not I go too? Why not? I will go. What else can I do? I will go, and I will speak to him. I will speak to him alone. What shall I say to him? Well, whatever—whatever—I will hear what he has to say, this man!

Having made this confused determination, he hastened to dress himself, and threw on his shoulders a casaque that had something of a military air, took up the pistol that was laid on the bed, and stuck it into his girdle, on one side, took another down from a nail in the wall, and stuck it in the other side: then placed his dagger in it, and taking down a carabine almost as famous as himself, he slung it round his neck. Having put on his hat, he left the room, but first went to that where he had left Lucia. Depositing his carabine in a corner near the door, he knocked and spoke. The old woman, jumping from the bed, and throwing something over her, ran to open the door. He entered, and casting a glance into the room, he perceived Lucia all gathered up in her corner, and quiet. "Does she sleep?" he asked of the old woman in a low tone, "does she sleep in that place? Were these my orders, wretch?"

"I have done all I could," she answerd, "but she refused to eat any thing, neither would she come——."

"Let her sleep in peace, be careful thou dost not disturb her, and when she awakes—Martha will come to the next room, and thou canst send for any thing she may want. When she awakes—tell her—that I—that the master is gone for a short time, that he will return, and that—he will do every thing that she wishes."

The old crone remained perfectly astounded, thinking within herself.—Is this some princess?

Leaving the room, and retaking his carabine, the Un-named sent Martha to wait in the anti-chamber, and ordered the first Bravo he found, to be on guard and see that no one but her entered the room; he then left the

castle, and with a rapid step began the descent. The manuscript does not notice the distance from the castle to the village where the cardinal was; it would not, however, be more than a good walk. We do not suppose this proximity merely because the country people were going there on foot, since in the memorials of those times, we find, that the people went twenty miles and more to see the Cardinal Federigo; but from all we shall have to narrate, that happened on this day, we infer the distance was short. The Bravo's that he met with on the way, respectfully stopped to let their master pass, that he might either give them his orders for the day, or take them with him on any expedition he might be on, and much astonished they were at the change in his countenance, and at the looks he cast at them when they bowed to him.

When he got to the bottom, into the public road, it was quite another affair. The first that saw him began to whisper to each other, to look suspiciously, and to move away, one here and another there. During the whole distance he never made two steps in company with any body else: every one, when they saw him draw near, looked frightened, bowed to him, and slackened their pace to let him get before. When he arrived at the village there was quite a crowd; and no sooner was he perceived, than his name passed from mouth to mouth, and the crowd opened to let him pass. Approaching one of these timid persons, he inquired of him where the cardinal was? "At the curate's house," the man respectfully answered, and pointed it out to him. He went there, entered a small court where there were many ecclesiastics, all of whom stared at him with wonder and suspicion. In front was a door wide open, which led to a small room, where, also, many other priests were assembled. He took his carabine from his neck and set it up in a corner of the court, then entered the room; there, also, eyes were set in motion, a name whispered, and then profound silence. Turning to one of them, he asked where the cardinal was, adding, that he wished to speak to him.

"I am a stranger," replied the man, and looking round, he called the chaplain, who was crossbearer, and who was at the very instant saying to another in a corner of the room, "he? that famous person? what has he to do here? keep away from him!" Still, at the call, which resounded in the general silence, he was obliged to come, and bowing to the Un-named, he heard his request, and raising, with an unquiet curiosity his eyes to his countenance, and letting them fall again, he remained some time before he stammered out, "I do not know if the most illustrious monsignor—at this very moment—can—if he be—if he is able—enough, I will go and see." And very reluctantly he went to the next room, where the cardinal was, to carry his message.

At this portion of our story, we cannot do less than stop a short time; like the traveler, tired and wearied out with the length of his journey through a barren and savage country, who loses a little of his time in reposing beneath the shade of a noble tree, upon the grass, near a spring of ripling water. We have now got up with a personage, whose name and whose memory, recur when they will, recreate the mind with a placid feeling of reverence, and with a delightful emotion of sympathy, especially after so many painful images, and after the contemplation of such complicated and vexatious perversity. About this personage it is absolutely necessary that we say a few words; any one who does not care to read them, and prefers getting on with the story, may pass right on to the next chapter.

Federigo Borromeo, born in 1574, was one of those rare persons, of whatever period, who have employed a remarkable understanding, the resources of great opulence, and all the advantages of a privileged condition, in a continued effort to discover and to practice that which is best. His life was like a stream, that falling limpidly from the rock, without becoming stagnant or troubled in its extended course over various soils, empties itself in all its purity into the river it augments. Amidst the most perfect ease, and with splendor at his command, from his boyhood he kept his eye fixed upon those words of self-denial and humility, upon those maxims directed against the vanity of all pleasure, the injustice of all pride upon true dignity, and true excellence, which, whether felt or unfelt in the human heart, are transmitted from one generation to another in the first instructive elements of religion. To those words, to those maxims, he looked; he thought of them seriously, he found them to his taste, because he found them to be true. It was evident to him that the words and maxims opposed to these, and which also are transmitted from age to age, with the same pertinacity, and sometimes with the same lips, could not be true; and, therefore, he proposed to himself, to adopt as the rule of his own actions and thoughts, that which was true. By the aid of these he perceived that human life is not destined to be a burthen to the many, and a feast for the rest, but that it is an occupation for all, and for which all are to render an account: he, therefore, began when a boy to consider how he could render his own life useful and holy.

In 1580 he declared his resolution to dedicate himself to the ecclesiastical profession, and received the habit from the hands of his cousin Charles, whom the universal voice had before this period signalized as a saint. Soon after, he entered the college founded by his relative, in Pavia, and which still bares the name of their house. There, attending assiduously to the occupations which were prescribed, he took upon himself two others also of his own accord: these were, to teach the Christian doctrine to the vilest and most degraded of the people, and to visit, keep, console, and suc-

cor the sick. He availed himself of the influence that all conceded to him in that place, to persuade his companions to second him in these works of charity; and in all things that were honest and profitable, he exercised, as if it had been his duty, an authority, that considering his understanding and his disposition, he would, perhaps, have in like manner obtained, if he had sprung from a low origin. Advantages of another kind, which the circumstances of fortune might procure for him, he not only did not seek for, but was anxious to refuse. He preferred a table that was rather poor than frugal, he wore a dress more homely than distinctive, and in harmony with these customs, was the tenor of his whole life and conduct. Nor did he ever think about changing his habits, although his connections made a great noise and complaint, that it was an abasement of the dignity of his house. He had other contests to sustain with the institutors of the college, who endeavored secretly and unexpectedly to make him appear in, and have about him, things of a somewhat showy nature, to distinguish him from the rest, and give him the appearance of the prince of the place: either they thought to make themselves acceptable to him by it, in the long run, or they were moved by that servile fawning which delights to bask beneath the splendor of another, or they were of the number of those discreet persons, who live under the shadow of the virtues as well as the vices, and who always preach that perfection is to be found midway, placing that point exactly where they have arrived themselves, and where they are at their ease. But far from yielding to these officious persons, he repelled them; and this happened between the age of puberty and manhood.

That, during the life time of his cousin Charles, who was older than him by twenty-six years, in the presence of a man who received even solemn respect from all, and encouraged by so much fame, and impressed by such indications of sanctity, Federigo, both when a boy and a young man, should have endeavored to conform to the deportment and desire of such a cousin, is certainly not extraordinary; but it is a remarkable thing, that after his death, no one could perceive that Federigo, then twenty years old, stood in need either of a guide or a censor. The increasing reputation of his understanding, of his doctrine and of his piety, his connections, and the influence of more than one powerful cardinal; the credit of his family, the name itself, to which Charles had annexed an idea of sanctity, and of priestly dignity, all which ought, and all which can lead men to ecclesiastical dignities, concurred to prognosticate his attainment of them. But persuaded inwardly that no one who professes Christianity in his heart, can deny with his mouth, that the superiority of man over other men, can only be justifiable but when it is used in their service, he feared dignities, and sought to avoid them: not certainly because he was unwilling to serve others, for few lives had been spent in doing this, as his had been; but because he did not think himself worthy enough, nor fit for such a high and dangerous service. Wherefore, Pope Clement VIII., having proposed in 1595 to invest him with the Archbishopric of Milan, he appeared much disturbed, and refused the charge without hesitation. And he only yielded to the express command of the pope.

Demonstrations of this kind—and who is ignorant of it?—are neither difficult nor uncommon, and it requires no greater effort of talent in hypocrisy to make them, than it requires buffoonery to ridicule them thoroughly in either case. But are they less the natural expression of a virtuous and wise feeling? Life is the touchstone of professions, and the declarations which express that feeling, even if they had passed through the lips of all the impostors and mockers in the world, will be always beautiful, when they have been preceded and followed by a life of disinterested sacrifices.

In Federigo, the archbishop, there was a careful and constant study not to appropriate on his own account, either the possessions, the time, or the attentions, of what belonged to himself, in short, beyond what was strictly necessary. He said, as all say, that ecclesiastical property is the patrimony of the poor; how that maxim was practically followed up by him, may be seen in this. He was desirous that an estimate should be made of what his maintenance ought to amount to, and the servants attached to him personally: and being told six hundred crowns, (the gold coin of that day was called scudo or crown, and always remaining of the same weight and purity, was afterwards called Zecchino,) he gave orders that that sum should be annually taken from his patrimonial income, for the use of his table, not believing that it was lawful for a man of his abundant means to live upon the patrimony of the church. Of his own property he was a very frugal and economical distributor for his own wants, never leaving off a garment which was not entirely worn out; uniting however, as it has been remarked by contemporaneous writers, to a taste for simplicity, a very exquisite neatness, two remarkable habits in fact in a sumptuous and dirty age. And also, that nothing might be wasted of the fragments of his frugal table, he ordered them to be given to an hospital for the poor; and one of them, by his orders, entered every day into the dinner hall, to gather whatever was left. A care, which might produce an idea, that he was a man of a covetous, needy, and narrow turn, with a mind clogged up by minutia, and incapable of elevated ideas, if we did not possess the ambrosian library, which Federigo conceived in such a spirit of magnificence, and erected from its foundation at so great an expense; and to furnish which with books and manu-

scripts,—besides the gift of those already collected with great care and expense by him, he despatched eight men, the most cultivated and skilled that he could find, to make purchases, in Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Flanders, Greece, Libanus and Jerusalem. By these means he succeeded in collecting about thirty thousand printed volumes, and fourteen thousand manuscripts.

To the library he united a college of Doctors, (they were nine in number, and supported by him whilst he lived, when the ordinary revenue not sufficing, they were reduced to two) and their duty was to cultivate various branches of study; theology, history, letters, ecclesiastical antiquities, and oriental languages, with the task imposed upon each of them to publish some work on the matter assigned to them. He added to this a college called by him, Trilingue,* for the study of Greek, Latin, and Italian; also a college of alumni, to be instructed in these faculties and languages, of which they were to be professors in turn: there was also a printing establishment for the oriental tongues, that is, for the Hebrew, the Chaldean, the Arabic, the Persian, and the Armenian; also a gallery of paintings, another of statues, and a school of the three principal branches of drawing. For these he could find professors already instructed; as to the rest, we have seen what a labor it cost him to collect the books and manuscripts, and certainly it was more difficult to succeed with the types of those languages, then much less cultivated in Europe than they are at present, and with the printers, still more than the types. It is enough to say, that of nine doctors, he took eight from amongst the young men educated at the seminary; from which a conclusion may be drawn as to the opinion he had formed of the studies pursued, and the reputations made at that period, a judgment in conformity with that which posterity seems to have made, by permitting both one and the other to go into oblivion.

In the directions that he left for the use and government of the library, it is evident he had in contemplation its perpetual utility, an idea admirable in itself, and in many details provident and noble, far beyond the notions and practices of that period. The librarian was directed to correspond with the most learned men of Europe, in order to collect information of the state of the sciences, of the most useful books in every branch of knowledge, and to acquire them: he was instructed to give notice to students of the works fitted for their particular branches, and directed that these, whether they were citizens or strangers, should have every accommodation, in order that they might take advantage of the books preserved there. Intentions of this kind, proposed at the foundation of a library, appear nothing very extraordinary in our days, but it was not so at that period. And in a history of this ambrosian library, (written with all the stile and elegance common to that period,) by one Pierpaolo Bosca, librarian, after the death of Federigo, it is expressly stated, as a remarkable thing, that in this library, formed by an individual, almost in every particular at his own expense, the books were exposed to the sight of every one, taken to whoever called for them, with commodious seats for those who wished to study; and pens, ink, and paper to make notes; whilst in other celebrated public libraries of Italy, the books were not only not exposed in that way, but were hid away in closets, from whence they were dragged out, as he says, only by the humanity of those who presided, when they felt in the humor to show them a moment: as to convenience and facilities for the students who visited them, nothing of the kind was thought of. So that the very act of enriching such libraries was a substraction of books from the common use, a sort of cultivation which existed both at that time and the present, and which impoverished the soil.

It would be superfluous to inquire what effects were produced by this institution of the Cardinal Borromeo, upon the public improvement; it would be easy to demonstrate, according as the subject might be treated, that they were wonderful, or that they were nothing at all: to endeavor to explain, up to a certain point, what they really were, would be a very fatiguing thing, of little utility, and out of place. But conceive what a generous, judicious, benevolent, persevering, lover of human improvement he must have been, who conceived such a plan, and in such a manner, and who executed it in the midst of so much gross ignorance, indolence, and the general indifference to all studious application, and who was consequently exposed to the most discouraging objections; to such expressions as,—*of what use can it be? there are other things to think about. A pretty notion to be sure! Now he has put the climax to it!* and others similar, certainly exceeding in number the crowns expended by him in the undertaking, which were one hundred and five thousand, the greater part belonging to himself.

To call such a man beneficent and liberal in a high degree, it would not be necessary that he should have disbursed a great deal more, in succoring the needy; and there are many persons in whose opinions expenses of this kind, and I would say all expenditures of this nature, constitute the best and most useful kind of alms. But in the opinion of Federigo, alms, properly so called, was a duty of the first order; and here, as in other matters, his actions were in conformity to his opinions. His life was one continued distribution to the poor. Upon the occasion of this dearth even, of which our story speaks, we shall have, by and by, to refer to some things where the wisdom and the nobleness which marked his liberality will be seen. Of the many singular examples which his biographers have noted of this great quality, we will quote only one. Having been informed

* Three languages.

that a nobleman used artifices and oppressions to force his daughter to become a nun, who was desirous of entering into the marriage state, he sent for him: the father confessed that the only motive he had for controling the inclinations of his daughter was, that he could not give her four thousand crowns as a dower, a sum which, according to his manner of thinking, was indispensable to her forming a connexion consistent with his rank. Federigo presented her with the four thousand crowns as a portion. Perhaps some may think this was an excessive piece of generosity, not well considered, and that it was yielding too much to the foolish caprices of a proud man, and that four thousand crowns might have been better employed in another way. We have no other answer to make to this, except that it would be very desirable to witness frequent excesses of a virtue so free from prevailing opinions, (every age has its own,) so separated from the general tendency, as in this case, was that which moved a man to give four thousand crowns, to prevent a young maiden from being forced to become a nun.

The inexhaustible charity of this man, not alone in giving, was conspicuous in all his actions. Of easy access to every one, he believed it to be his duty to receive every one belonging to what is called the lower class, with a cheerful countenance, and a kind courtesy, and the more so the lower their condition. And here too he had to dispute with some honest people who belonged to the *ne quid nimis* class, who also wanted to govern his actions. One of these, once, when Federigo on a visit to an alpine and wild country place, was giving instruction to some poor little boys, and was caressing them whilst he was questioning them, told him he ought to be careful in touching those boys, as they were too filthy and dirty; as if the worthy man might not have supposed that Federigo had sense enough to make the discovery himself, and wit enough to do without such advice. Such is, in certain conditions of the times and of things, the misfortune of men of rank, who whilst they so seldom find persons to warn them against their faults, are never wanting in courageous friends to prevent them from doing good. But the good bishop, not without some feeling of resentment, answered, "these are my own souls; perhaps they may never see my face again, and wont you let me even caress them?"

Resentment, however, was a very rare occurrence with him, who was admired for his gentleness, and an imperturbable suavity of manner, which might have been attributed to an extraordinary happy temper, but which was the effect of constant discipline over a hasty and quick nature. If sometimes he appeared severe, and even stern, it was with his subordinate pastors, when he discovered them to be avaricious, or negligent, or tainted with any other defects especially opposed to the spirit of their noble ministry. In all things that related to his personal interests, or his temporal glory, he never showed any emotions of joy, or of regret, of ardor, or of agitation, wonderful if these motives were not awakened in his mind, still more wonderful if they could act there. Not only from the many conclaves where he had assisted, he issued with the reputation of never having looked up to a post so desirable in the eyes of ambition, and of such terrible responsibility to a pious mind, but upon one occasion, when one of his colleagues, a person of great influence, came to offer him his vote, and that (it was language that was used) of his faction. Federigo refused the proposition in such a way, that the matter was pursued no further, and he gave his influence elsewhere. The same modesty, the same disposition to avoid command, appeared equally in the most ordinary occurrences of life. Indefatigable and attentive in arranging and directing, where he deemed it his duty to do so, he always declined interfering with the affairs of others; indeed, he excused himself in every possible way from it, even when he was pressed to do so: a discretion and restraint somewhat uncommon, as every one knows, in men extremely zealous of doing good, as Federigo was.

If we were to abandon ourselves to the agreeable occupation of collecting the remarkable traits of his character, there would certainly result a singular complication of merits apparently opposed, and not easily united together. But we will not omit mentioning another singularity of his rare life, that, full as it was with the energies of action, of government, of functions, of instruction, of audiences, of diocesan visits, of journies, and of opposition, he not only found time for study, but so much time, that a professional man of letters could not have done more. In fact, amidst the other various titles conferred on him by public admiration, his contemporaries gave him, in a high degree, the praise of being a learned man.

We will not, however, conceal, that he entertained with a firm persuasion, and sustained with great constancy, some opinions, which in our day would seem to every one rather odd than ill founded; I mean even to those who might have a strong desire to find them right. Any one who would wish to defend him in this, might use the current and accepted excuse, that they were the errors of his time, rather than his own: an excuse, to speak the truth, which, when it is suggested by a particular examination of facts, may be valid and significant; but when generally, and thus nakedly applied, as is commonly done, and as we must do in this case, means nothing at all. And still, not intending to resolve complicated questions by simple assertions, we shall forbear to expound them, contenting ourselves with observing, in a rapid way, and that we may not appear to have intended to compose a funeral oration, that in a man so admirably composed in the whole, we do not pretend that every thing was excellent alike.

We certainly are not doing wrong to our readers by supposing that some of them may ask if a man of so much talent and application has left no monument behind him. Left any! Betwixt great and small, he has left about one hundred, in Latin and Italian, in print and in manuscript, which are preserved in the library founded by him: treatises on morals, orations, dissertations on history, sacred and profane antiquity, literature, the arts, and other branches.

And how is it, the reader will say, that so many works are forgotten, or at least so little known, so little inquired after? How is it, that with so much talent, so much study, so much practical knowledge of men and things, so much meditation, so much ardor for all that is excellent and beautiful, so much candor of soul, and so many of those other qualities that constitute a great writer, this man has not, in a hundred works, left even one that might be judged remarkable by those who could not altogether approve of it, or be known by its title, even by those who have not read it? How is it that all of them put together have not been sufficient, even by their number, to procure for his name a literary reputation with posterity? The inquiry is a reasonable one beyond all doubt, and the question is interesting enough, because the reasons of a phenomenon of this kind, are to be found, or at least it would be necessary to seek them, in many general facts; and when got at, they would lead to the explanation of other similar phenomena. But they would be numerous and prolix, and then if you should not happen to be satisfied with them? if they should happen to put you out of temper? Upon the whole, it will be better to take up the thread of our story, and instead of gossipping any longer about this man, let us take a look at him in action, under the guidance of our author.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Cardinal Federigo, as was his custom at every leisure moment, was reading, until the hour to go to church to perform divine service had arrived, when the chaplain who officiated as crossbearer entered, with an unquiet and troubled countenance.

"A strange visit, very strange indeed, most illustrious monsignor!"

"Who is it?" asked the cardinal.

"Nothing less than the Signor ——," answered the chaplain, and articulating the syllables in a very significant manner, uttered the name which we cannot write down for our readers. Then added, "he is here at the door in person, and all he asks is to be presented to your most illustrious excellency."

"He!" said the cardinal, with his countenance lighted up, shutting the book, and rising from his seat, "Let him come in! Let him come immediately!"

"But—" replied the chaplain without moving, your most illustrious excellency must know who he is; the outlaw, the famous—"

"And is it not a rare piece of good fortune for a bishop, that a desire to seek for him should have got into the head of such a man?"

"But—" insisted the chaplain, "we can never mention certain things, but Monsignor always says they are nonsense; still when the case occurs, it appears to me to be a duty. Zeal creates enemies Monsignor, and we know positively that more than one scoundrel has dared to threaten, that some day or other—"

"Well, and what have they done?" interrupted the Cardinal.

"I say that this man is a monopolizer of villanies, a desperate person that is connected with the most furious desperadoes, and he may be sent here to—"

"Oh! what sort of discipline is this? Federigo interrupted him smiling, "here are the soldiers exhorting the general to be afraid." Then become grave and thoughtful, he resumed, "Saint Charles would not have been found thus deliberating whether he should receive a man like this, he would have gone himself to seek him. Let him come in directly, he has waited too long already."

The chaplain moved, saying in his heart,—there is no remedy, what headstrong beings all these saints are.

Having opened the door, and looked into the room where the Un-named and the others were, he saw these last on one side whispering and peeping at him, who was standing alone in a corner. He turned towards him, and examining him cautiously from his neck downwards, he was imagining what sort of arms he had about him hid under his casaque and about which truly he ought to have asked him some questions, before he introduced him, but this he could not resolve to do. Having got to his side, he said "Monsignor is waiting for your excellency, please to come with me."

And going before him in the small crowd that immediately gave way, he threw out looks to the right and left which were intended to mean—what can be done? you know also that he will always have his own way.

The chaplain opened the door, and ushered in the Un-named. Federigo met him with an earnest and serene aspect and with his hands open before him, as though he had been expecting him: he made signs to the chaplain to leave the room, who obeyed.

The two remained for some time silent, with their thoughts, from various motives, suspended. The Un-named, who had been impelled by an inexplicable agitation, involuntary on his part, rather than led there by any determined intention, remained also involuntarily torn by two opposing passions; the desire and the confused hope to find some relief to his internal torment, and on the other hand, a vexation and shame to come there like a penitent, like

one who had submitted, as a wretch does to confess his crimes, and to implore pardon from a man: he could find nothing to say, nor indeed did he attempt to find any thing. Yet, raising his eyes to the countenance of that man, he felt himself more and more overpowered with a sentiment of veneration for him, at once imperious and gentle, which increasing his confidence, softened his vexation, and without wounding his pride, made him give place and remain silent.

The presence of Federigo in fact was of that class, which announced superiority, and made it amiable at the same time. His deportment was naturally composed, and almost involuntarily majestic, not in the least bowed or affected by time. A steady yet lively eye, a brow, frank and thoughtful: even in his whitened locks, and in the paleness which abstinence, meditation, and fatigue had produced, a kind of virgin freshness could be perceived: every thing in his countenance indicated that at a former period, it had possessed every quality that constitutes beauty: the habit of entertaining solemn and benevolent thoughts, the internal peace of a long life, the love of man, the continual joy of an ineffable hope, had substituted in his noble features, I would almost say, a senile beauty, still more remarkable in the magnificent simplicity of the purple.

He also kept for an instant, fixed on the aspect of the Un-named, his penetrating look, long exercised in gathering the thoughts of others from the expression of their countenances, and beneath the dark and troubled features of the person before him, appearing to discover something consistent with the hope he had conceived, at the first announcement of such a visit; full of animation, he said "Oh! what a welcome visit is this! and how grateful I ought to be to you for such a good resolution, although I deserve some little reproach from you!"

"Reproach!" exclaimed the unknown, astonished, but softened by those words and the manner in which they were spoken, pleased too that the cardinal had broken the ice, and begun the conversation.

"Certainly, it is a reproach to me," he went on, "that I have permitted you to anticipate me, when so long ago, so many times, I might have, and I ought to have gone to see you myself."

"See me, you! Do you know who I am? Have they told you my name?"

"And the consolation which I feel, and which certainly is manifested in my face, do you think I could have felt it at the announcement and sight of one unknown to me? It is you that have made me feel so; you, I say, whom I ought to have sought out; you whom at least I have so much loved and wept over, for whom I have prayed so much; you, of all my children, and I love them all most cordially, whom I should have most desired to meet and to embrace, if I could have encouraged the hope of being permitted to do so. But God, he alone knows how to produce miracles, and makes up for the weakness and the tardiness of his poor creatures."

The Un-named was astonished at an address so full of zeal, and fired by animation, at words which formed so perfect an answer to what he had even not yet uttered, but had well determined to say; and moved, but astonished, still remained silent.

"And how then?" said Federigo, still more affectionately, "you have happy news to give me, and you keep me sighing here for them."

"Happy news? I! I have hell in my heart, and how can I be the bearer of happy news? Say, yourself, if you know it, what happy news do you expect to hear from one like myself?"

"That God has touched your heart, and wishes to make you his own," replied the cardinal quietly.

"God! God! God! If I could see him! If I could feel him! where is this God?"

"Do you ask me that? you? and who is he nearer to than yourself? Do not you feel him in your heart; is he not struggling within you, agitating you? does he leave you alone for a moment? and at the same time does not he draw you gently to him? does not he make you feel a hope of peace, of consolation, of a consolation that shall be full, immense, as soon as you shall have acknowledged him, confessed him, and implored his mercy?"

"Certainly! I have something that struggles within me, that devours me! But God! if this is God, if it is he of whom they speak, what would you have him make of me?"

These words were uttered with an accent of despair, but Federigo, with a solemn tone, as of placid inspiration, answered, "What can God make of you? what can he do with you? A glorious mark of his power and his goodness, he means to be glorified by you more than he could be by others. If the world has cried out so long against you, if a thousand and a thousand voices have been raised in detestation of your deeds, (the Un-named started, and was astounded for a moment to hear such unaccustomed language spoken to him, and still more so to find that he was rather relieved than angered at it,) what glory," pursued Federigo, "does not God receive? They have been voices of terror, voices of interest, voices, perhaps, of justice, but of a justice so easy, so natural! Some, perhaps, have been tinged with envy of your deplorable power, and of your hitherto bad inflexibility of mind. But when you yourself stand up to condemn your own life, to accuse yourself, then! then, indeed, God will be glorified! and you ask what God can make of you? Who am I, poor creature, to be able to tell you, at this time, what profit such a master may draw out of you? what direction he may give to your impetuous will, to your imperturbable perseverance, when he has animated it, inflamed it with love, with hope, with repentance? Who are you, poor man, that think you have been able, by yourself, to execute things more extraordinary in

evil than God may cause you to imagine and to make perfect in works of goodness? What can God make of you? Cannot he pardon you? Cannot he bring you to salvation? Cannot he fulfil in you the work of redemption? Are not these magnificent things, and worthy of him? Oh, think only! if I, who am nothing but a man, a miserable creature, and still so full of myself, if I, such as I am, feel so deeply interested in your salvation, that to secure it I would lay down with joy (God is my witness) the few days that remain to me; think, then, how great, and how inconceivable, is the love of him, who has drawn me to you in this imperfect but lively manner; how much he loves you, how he affects you; he who commands and who inspires in my heart a love that devours me!"

As these words came from his lips, his countenance, his looks, every motion, expressed their meaning. The face of his auditor, at first turned aside and convulsed, soon became full of astonishment and attention; as he proceeded, his agitation became deeper, but less full of anguish: his eyes that from infancy had shed no tears, began to swell, and when the cardinal had ceased, he covered his face with his hands, and burst out into a loud sobbing, the last and the most unequivocal answer.

"Almighty and kind God!" exclaimed Federigo, raising his eyes and his hands to heaven, "what have I, useless servant, slumbering pastor, ever done, that thou shouldest call me to this feast of grace, that thou shouldest have made me worthy to assist at such a joyful prodigy?" Saying this, he put out his hand to take that of the Un-named.

"No!" exclaimed he, "No! keep yourself far, far from me, do not defile that beneficent and innocent hand. You do not know what the hand has done that you seek to clasp."

"Let me," said Federigo, taking his hand with an affectionate violence, "let me press the hand that can repair so many wrongs, that can dispense so much beneficence, that can raise up so many who are afflicted, that will now offer itself unarmed in peacefulness and in humility, to so many enemies."

"This is too much," said the Un-named, sobbing, "leave me, Monsignor, good Federigo, leave me. An assembled people awaits you; so many pure souls, so many innocents, so many of them come from afar to look once upon your face, to hear the sound of your voice; and you—you are detaining yourself with—with whom!"

"Let us leave the ninety-nine sheep," replied the cardinal; "they are safe on the mountain; I wish now to stay with the one that was lost. Those good souls are, perhaps, now infinitely more content, than they could be at seeing this poor bishop. Perhaps God, who has worked in you this prodigy of mercy, has spread in their hearts a joy, at this moment, the cause of which they yet know not. The people, perhaps, are in their hearts united to us without knowing it: perhaps the Holy Spirit has breathed into them an indistinct ardor of charity, a prayer for you that is favorably received by him, a pouring out of thanks of which you are the yet unknown object." Saying this, he extended his arms towards the neck of the Un-named, who, after endeavoring to avoid it, and resisting for a moment, yielded, and altogether subdued by so much charity and love, embraced the cardinal himself, and let his trembling and now changed countenance, fall upon his shoulders. His burning tears fell upon the uncontaminated purple of Federigo, whose unstained hands affectionately drew to him, and pressed to his bosom, the casaque that had borne the arms of violence and treachery.

The Un-named loosening himself from the embrace, again covered his eyes with one of his hands, and raising his face, exclaimed, "God, truly great! god, truly good! I know myself now, I comprehend who I am. My iniquities are before me, I tremble at myself; still—still I experience a comfort, a joy, yes a joy, such as I have never before experienced during the whole of my horrible life!"

"It is a foretaste that god gives you to allure to his service, to encourage you to enter resolutely into the new life in which you have so much to undo, so much to repair, so much to lament over."

"Wretch that I am!" exclaimed he, "how many, many things I can do nothing but lament over! But at least, there are still some enterprises scarce begun, which if I can do nothing else, I can stop, one there is that I can immediately arrest, and entirely repair."

Federigo was all attention, whilst the Un-named briefly related to him, but in terms perhaps of greater execration than we have done, his forcible abduction of Lucia, the sufferings, the terrors of the poor girl, the manner in which she had implored him, the agitation she had created in him, and that she was still in the castle—

"Ah! let us lose no time!" exclaimed Federigo, breathless with compassion and solicitude. "Blessed are you! this is an earnest of God's pardon! to enable you to become the instrument of saving one whom you was seeking to destroy. God bless you! God has blessed you! Do you know what part of the country this poor distressed creature belongs to?"

The Un-named told the cardinal whence she came.

"It is not far from here," replied he, "God be praised, and probably—." Saying this he went to a table and rang a little bell. The chaplain cross-bearer anxiously entered, and the first thing he did was to look at the Un-named; observing his changed countenance, and his eyes red with weeping, he looked at the cardinal, and amidst his unalterable composure, perceiving in his countenance an innate content, and an extraordinary solicitude, he got into a sort of extasy, with his mouth wide open, which the cardinal soon roused

him from, by asking if amongst the parish priests now assembled, the one belonging to —— was there.

"He is, most illustrious Monsignor," answered the chaplain.

"Let him come in immediately," said Federigo, "and with him the parish priest of this place also."

The chaplain left the room, and went to that where the priests were congregated together; all eyes were turned on him. With his mouth still open, and his features still impressed with astonishment, he raised his hands, and waving them in the air, said "Gentlemen, gentlemen! *hæc mutatio dexteræ Excelsi*," and stopped without adding any thing else. Then resuming his accustomed tone and manner, he added, "his most illustrious and most reverend excellency desires to see the Signor curate of this parish, and the Signor curate of ——."

The first named came forward immediately, and at the same time a voice exclaiming *me?* came from the midst of the company, drawled out, with an intonation of wonder.

"Are not you the Singor curate of ——," said the chaplain.

"Precisely, but—

"His most illustrious and most reverend excellency desires to see you."

"Me?" said the same voice, clearly signifying by that monosyllable,—how can I possibly go in there? But this time with the voice, there came out the man likewise, Don Abbondio in person, with an unwilling step, and a face half annoyed, and half astonished. The chaplain made him a sign with his hand, which meant,—come, let us go, what makes you so slow? And going before the two curates, he opened the door, and introduced them.

The cardinal quitted the hand of the unknown, with whom he had in the meantime concerted what was to be done, removed a short distance from him, and beckoned the curate of the parish to him. Informing him of what was going on, he asked if he could find a good woman immediately, who would go in a litter to the castle to receive Lucia; a stout hearted and fearless woman, who would understand how to conduct herself in an expedition of so new a character, who would adapt her manners to the occasion, would use a language best suited to cheer and tranquilize the poor girl, to whom, after so much anguish and trouble, this deliverance itself might occasion new distress and confusion. Having thought a moment, the curate said he knew a fit person, and left the room. The cardinal then beckoned the chaplain, and ordered him to have the litter got ready with the bearers, and to saddle the two mules for riding. The chaplain being gone, he turned to Don Abbondio.

He had already drawn rather nigh to the cardinal in order to get at a comfortable distance from the Un-named, and was quietly peeping first at one and then the other, contriving in his head what all this could possibly be about, when coming forward a little, he bowed, and said, "It has been signified to me that your most illustrious excellency wished to see me, but I suppose they have made a mistake."

"It is no mistake," said Federigo, "I have a glad piece of news to tell you, and a most consoling and delightful charge to entrust you with. One of your parishioners, that you have lamented as lost, Lucia Mondella, has been found; she is in the neighborhood, in the house of this dear friend of mine; and you shall now go with him, and with a woman whom the curate of this place is gone for; you shall go, I say, to receive this poor creature of yours, and shall accompany her here."

Don Abbondio did his very best to conceal his vexation, what shall I say? His distress and the bitter annoyance this proposition or command imposed upon him; and not having time to get rid of the ugly grimaces that it had brought into his countenance, he endeavored to conceal them, by bowing profoundly, as a sign of obedience. And he only raised it to make another profound bow to the Un-named, with a piteous sort of look, that said —— I am altogether in your hands, have mercy on me—*parcere subjectis*.

The cardinal then inquired of him what relations Lucia had?

"She has no near relations with whom she lives or could reside, except her mother," answered Don Abbondio.

"Is she at home?"

"Yes, Monsignor."

"Since," said Federigo, "this poor maiden cannot be so soon restored to her home, it will be a great consolation to her to see her mother as soon as possible; but if the curate does not get back before I go to church, I shall ask you to tell him to get a wagon, or something to ride on, and to send some discreet man to find her mother and bring her here." "Perhaps if I was to go?" said Abbondio.

"No, no, not you; I have asked you to do something else," answered the cardinal.

"I meant," said Don Abbondio, "merely to prepare the poor mother; she is a very sensitive woman, and it will require one who is acquainted with her, and who knows how to talk to her, so that no harm may be done to her, instead of good."

"And on this account I beseech you to tell the curate to choose a man proper for that, you will effect a better work in another place," replied the cardinal. And he would have wished to add, that poor girl has great need of seeing some known face that she can confide in, in that castle, after so many hours of dreadful sufferings, and amidst such an uncertainty of the future. But he restrained himself on account of the presence of the Un-named. It appeared strange, however, to the cardinal, that Don Abbondio had not thought of it himself, and he was so struck with his offer and his persisting in it, so out of place, that he began to think there was something under all this. Looking in his face, he easily per-

ceived the dread which was visible there of traveling with that tremendous man, and of being his guest, even for a few instants. Desirous of dissipating these cowardly apprehensions, and not liking to draw the curate aside and speak to him apart, whilst his new friend was there, he thought it would be best to do what he would even have done without this particular motive, speak to the Un-named himself, and from his answer Don Abbondio would finally comprehend that he was not a man to be any longer afraid of. He, therefore, approached the unknown, and with that appearance of spontaneous confidence which is felt by a new and potent affection, as well as by an ancient intimacy," do not imagine, he said, "that I shall be satisfied with one visit for today! You will return, is it not so? in company with this worthy ecclesiastic?"

"If I shall return," replied the Un-named, "if even you were to deny yourself to me, I would obstinately remain at your door, like a mendicant. I want to talk to you! I want to hear you, to see you! I want you altogether!"

Federigo took his hand, pressed it, and said, "You will then do the pastor of this parish and myself the favor of dining with us. I shall expect you. In the mean time I go to pray, and to offer up thanks with the people, whilst you will go and gather the first fruits of mercy."

Don Abbondio, at such demonstrations, stood like a frightened boy who sees a man caressing a great ferocious looking hairy dog, with red eyes, and a famous bad name for biting and attacking people. "What a nice, quiet, good dog that is of yours," says a bystander to him, and the boy looks at the man, who neither contradicts nor assents: he looks at the dog, but has not the courage to go near him, lest the nice, quiet, good dog should show his teeth, if only for the love of sport; and he does not like to push off, lest he should seem a coward, whilst he is saying in his heart, I wish I was at home!

The cardinal, who had moved to depart, holding the Un-named all the time by the hand, and drawing him with him, looked again at poor Don Abbondio, who remained behind, stupid, mortified, and with a face as long as his arm. And thinking, perhaps, that his chagrin might be caused by his appearing to be neglected and left in a corner, and especially where so great a criminal seemed welcomed and caressed in preference to himself, turned towards him in passing, stopped a moment, and with a courteous smile, said, "Signor curate, you are always with me in the house of our good father, but this—this one "*perierat et inventus est.*"

"Oh, how happy I am!" said Don Abbondio, making a profound reverence to them both.

The archbishop went before, pushed the doors, which were immediately thrown wide open by two servants, who stood at the sides, and the wonderful pair appeared before the longing eyes of the clergymen assembled in the room. They gazed upon their two countenances on which were depicted emotions of a different kind, but equally deep: an acknowledged tenderness, a humble joy played on the venerable features of Federigo; upon those of the Un-named was perceived a disorder tempered by comfort, a nascent diffidence, a compunction, through which still transpired the vigor of that wild and awakened nature. And it was afterwards known, that that passage in Isaiah occurred to more than one of the spectators, "*the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the calf and the young lion and the fatlings together.*" Don Abbondio came after him, but no one looked at him.

When they were in the centre of the room, one of the chamberlains of the cardinal entered on the other side, and drew near to him to say that the orders he had received from the chaplain had been executed, that the litter and the two mules were ready, and that they were only waiting for the woman that the curate was to find. The cardinal told him that when he arrived, he must tell the curate to speak with Don Abbondio, under whose direction, and that of the Un-named, every thing was to be placed. He again pressed the hand of this last, in the act of taking leave, saying, "I shall expect you," then turned to salute Don Abbondio with an inclination of his head, and moved in the direction of the church; the clergy followed behind, in a sort of mixed procession, and the two traveling companions remained alone in the room together.

The Un-named was wrapt up in himself, thoughtful; and impatient for the moment to arrive when he could go and deliver, from suffering and imprisonment, his Lucia: his, in a sense so different from that in which she had been the preceding day. His ceuntenance expressed a concentrated agitation, which, to the jealous eye of Don Abbondio, might easily forbode something worse. He took a glance at him, and would fain have brought about a friendly conversation, but what have I got to say to him, thought he; shall I repeat again, oh, how happy I am! Happy at what? Why, because, having been a perfect devil till now, you have made up your mind to be an honest man, like other people. A pretty sort of compliment! Ay, ay, turn the words as I will, they will mean nothing but that at last And whether it is true or not, that he has become an honest man so all of a sudden! People put on appearances so often in this world, and for so many reasons! How can I tell whether they are always in earnest or not? And in the meantime, I am told to go with him into that castle! Oh, what a fine story this is! A pretty piece of business to be sure! Who would have thought of such a thing this morning? If I get safe and sound out of this scrape, the Signora Perpetua shall hear my mind about it She must drive me away from my parish when there was not the least necessity for it; and that all the parish priests were coming from every quarter, from the greatest

distances, and that there must be no lagging behind, and that this must be done, and that must be done, and so get we embarked in a concern of this kind. Oh! unfortunate me! still it is absolutely necessary to say something to him. And he had just made up his mind to say—I could never have supposed it would be my good fortune to get into such respectable company—and was just opening his mouth, when the chamberlain entered with the village curate to say that the woman was ready in the litter, and to ask Don Abbondio for the directions the cardinal had left with him. Don Abbondio communicated them as well as his confused state of mind admitted, and whispered to the chamberlain, "Give me a quiet beast, at least; for, to tell the truth, I am no great cavalier."

"Just figure to yourself," said the chamberlain, half grinning, "it's the secretary's mule; he's nothing but a man of letters you know."

"That's sufficient," replied Don Abbondio, and continued thinking—Heaven send me a good time of it.

The Un-named when he heard the litter announced, eagerly left the room, but when he reached the door, and found Don Abbondio was behind, he stopped a moment; arriving in haste, and being about to excuse himself, the Un-named bowed to him, and made him pass on before with a courteous and humble demeanor, that produced a favorable effect upon the nerves of the poor man. But scarcely had they reached the court-yard, when another novelty occurred which broke up all his comfort; he saw the Un-named go to a corner, lay hold of his carabine with one hand by the stock, and by the strap with the other, and sling it over his neck, with a rapid motion, as if he was doing his exercise.

Ay! ay! ay!—thought Don Abbondio—what is he going to do with that machine, eh? Pretty sort of hair cloth that! Pretty discipline for a new convert! And if some mad notion gets into his head? Oh! what an expedition I am going on! Oh! what an expedition!

If the Un-named could possibly have imagined what sort of notions were at work in his companion's head, there is no knowing what he might have said to reassure him; but he was far from thinking about it at all, and Don Abbondio was very careful not to betray openly his doubts. Having reached the gate of the street, they found the mules harnessed, and the Un-named mounted the one which a palfrenier presented to him.

"He is not vicious, eh?" said Don Abbondio, to the chamberlain, with one foot in the stirrup, and another on the ground.

"You can mount him with confidence, he is a perfect lamb," answered he. Don Abbondio now laid hold of the saddle, the chamberlain gave him a lift, and at length he got fairly astride.

The litter which was a few paces before, with a pair of mules, now moved on at the voice of the driver, and the whole convoy got under way.

It was necessary to pass before the church that was crowded with people, and through a small square, in like manner filled with the peasantry that had not been able to get in the church. The great news were already spread, and at the appearance of the party, of that that man who but a few hours before had been an object of terror and execration, but now of a glad astonishment, a murmur of applause arose in the multitude, and whilst they made room for him to pass, they still disputed with one another to get a good opportunity of looking at him. The litter passed on, the Un-named followed, and before the open doors of the church he took off his hat, and bowed that front, once the object of so much dread, down to the very neck of his mule, whilst the people whispered audibly out, "God bless him!" Don Abbondio also took off his hat, bowed, and recommended himself to Heaven; but hearing the solemn concert of his brethren in the distant chant, he felt so much envy, such a mournful sort of tenderness, and such a compassion at heart for himself, assault him, that it was with difficulty he could restrain his tears.

Having left the habitations, and reached the open country, where the winding paths were for the most part a solitude, a darker veil began to extend itself over his thoughts. He had no one to look to with confidence but the driver of the litter, who, since he belonged to the cardinal's establishment, must certainly be a man to be depended upon, and he had not a cowardly look either. Every now and then they met groups of passengers on the road, going to see the cardinal, and this gave Don Abbondio some passing comfort; but they were approaching that terrible valley, where there was nobody but subjects of his friend at his side; and what subjects!

He now wished more than ever to get into conversation with him, as well to find out something more, as to keep him in good humor, but he appeared so deeply pre-occupied, that he lost the inclination to do it. He found himself therefore reduced to the necessity of talking to himself, and here is a portion of his reflections during the ride, for if we were to put down the whole of them, there would have been enough to make a book.

"It's a famous saying, that great saints as well great sinners have got quicksilver in them, and that they are not satisfied with being always in motion, and worrying themselves, but they must make the whole human race hop and skip about into the bargain; and then the most outrageous busy bodies amongst them, must just take it into their heads to look me up, me, who never trouble myself about any body; lugging me by the hair of my head into their affairs, me, that ask no favors of any body, but to be let alone.

"That mad devil Don Rodrigo! What does he want in this world, to make him the hap-

piest man it, if he had the least imaginable degree of discretion. Rich, young, respected, nay courted, nothing's the matter with him but being too well off, that's his complaint, and so to cure himself, he must fain be worrying himself and every body else. He might take up the trade of a saint if he liked, but no, Signor, he must take up the trade of running after and plaguing the women, the most crazy, villanous and outrageous calling in the whole world. Might not he drive into paradise with his own carriage if he chose? And yet he would rather go to the devil's den with a game leg. And my friend here,—and here he looked at him, as if he was afraid of his thoughts being heard. He, after turning the whole country topsy turvy with his villanies, has now set it all crazy with this affair of his conversion—if indeed there is any thing in it And it has fallen to my share to discover whether it is so or not! Yes, yes, so it is, when people come into the world with all this fury in their bodies, they must for ever after be kicking up such confusion. Can't people be contented with just playing the honest man as I have been doing all my life? No, Signor, that's not enough, they must take to killing, and murdering, and quartering, and playing the devil—Oh, unfortunate me! And then when the inclination has passed away, there must be more confusion about their repentance. When a man really wants to repent, it can be done at home, quietly, without so much parade, and without giving so much trouble to his neighbors. And then his most illustrious excellency—he goes off all at once—just like a gun, open arms—my dear friend! my dear friend! and swallows down all this man tells him, just as easily if he had seen him do miracles; and then right off he comes to a resolution, jumps into it hands and feet, presto here, presto there—at my house we call this precipitation! But the worst of it is, that without any sort of security, without taking a pledge of any kind, he puts a poor curate into his hands, just as if he was nothing at all. This I call playing at odd and even for a man! A holy bishop, as he is, should hold his curates as precious as he does the apples of his own eyes. A little bit of moderation, a little bit of prudence, and a little bit of charity, it does seem to me would become holiness very well—And if all this should be nothing but a bam? Who is there knows every thing that men mean? and especially such men as our friend here? To think only that I have to go with him, all the way to his own house! There may be some devilry at the bottom of all this. Oh! Lord help us! it's better not to think about it! What is all this imbroglio about Lucia? It's clear there has been some understanding with Don Rodrigo. What men! or it could not be just as it is: but how has this man got her into his clutches? Who can tell? It's Monsignor's secret, and me, that they send trotting about in this way, they tell me nothing. What do I care about knowing other people's affairs? Still when one's risking one's own skin, one ought to know what it's all about. If it was simply to go and bring away that poor creature, one might be patient; although he might as well have brought her along with him at first. But I want to know if this man is so completely converted, and has become such a piece of sanctity, what occasion there was to send me? Oh, what a chaos? Well! it is Heaven has ordered it to be so; its a troublesome business to be sure, but patience! I shall be glad for that poor Lucia's sake, she has got out of a great scrape no doubt. Heaven knows how much she has suffered, I pity her, but it's clear she was born for my ruin. If only I could see into this man's heart, and know what he is thinking about. Who can comprehend him? Look at him, sometimes he looks like Saint Anthony in the Desert, and then again he looks like Holofernes in propria persona. Oh, poor me! poor me! Well, Heaven at any rate is under some obligation to help me, for this is a scrape I have got into not of my own seeking."

In fact, upon the countenance of the Unnamed, thoughts could be observed, flitting like clouds in a storm before the face of the sun, where the fierceness of light and the gloom of shade alternate with each other. His soul still luxuriating in the sweet words of Federigo, and born and become young again in this new life, was lifted up to those ideas of mercy, of pardon, and of love, and then sank again beneath the weight of the terrible past. Anxiously his mind ran over the iniquities he could repair, the violences he could arrest, the most certain and expeditious remedies he had in his power; how he could unloose so many intricate knots; what he could do with so many accomplices; it was darkness itself to think all this. To this very expedition, the easiest and the soonest accomplished, he went with a desire perturbed by anguish; by the thought, that whilst she was suffering, heaven knew how much, it was himself, who nevertheless was impatient to deliver her, that was the cause of her misery. At every fork of the road, the driver turned to receive directions how to proceed, whilst the Un-named motioned him with his hand, and made signs to him to get on.

They entered the valley. How did poor Don Abbondio feel then? That famous valley! of which he had heard so many black and horrible stories told. He was there in it! Those famous men, the flower of the Bravos of Italy, men without fear and without mercy, he would see them in their flesh and blood, he would meet one, two, three of them at every turn in the road. All bowed submissively to the Un-named. But their bronzed muzzles, their shaggy mustachios, their ferocious eyes, spoke but one language to Don Abbondio, and that was—there's a priest going to get it finely!—Such an effect did they produce on him, that at one moment of his consternation, he could not help saying

to himself,—If I had even married them, worse than this could not have happened to me.

In the meantime they pursued a gravelly path by the side of the torrent: in front nothing was to be seen but savage and rugged precipices; behind them was apopulation, the aspect of which made even a desert desirable. Dante was not worse off, in the centre of his Malebolge.

They passed by Malanotte. Some horrid looking Bravos were standing at the door, they bowed to the Un-named, and cast a sinister look at Don Abbondio and the litter. They did not know what to think of all this: the departure of the Un-named in the morning, alone, was something extraordinary, his return was not less so. Was it some victim he was conducting home. How had he contrived to get possession of her unaided? And a strange litter too, how was that? Who could that livery belong to? They looked, and looked, but no one moved, for they could read from his eye and his countenance that they were not to stir.

The ascent was gained, and they reached the top. The Bravos on the lawn and around the door, make room to let them pass: the Un-named motions them to be still, rides on before the litter, and beckons to Don Abbondio and the driver to follow him. Having entered the first court, and passed the second, he rode up to a small door, directed a Bravo who ran up to hold the stirrup, with a sign to stand back, and said to him, "Remain here, and let no one come nearer." Having dismounted, he went to the litter with the reins in his hand, and said to the woman in an undertone, who had drawn the curtain aside, "Console her immediately, make her comprenend that she is free, and that she is in the hands of friends; God will reward you for it." He then ordered the driver to open the door of the litter, and let the woman get out. Drawing near to Don Abbondio, with a serene countenance, such as he had never observed in him before, nor thought him capable of assuming, with a joy beaming from it on account of the good work he was about to complete, he assisted him to dismount, and said in an under tone, "Signor curate, I do not ask you to excuse me for the inconvenience you have to bear on my account; you are enduring it for one who pays well, and for this poor creature of his!"

These words and the expression of his countenance had the effect of placing Don Abbondio's heart in his bosom again. Drawing a sigh that had been pent up there for an hour, without being able to get out, he answered, in a tone quite submissive, as it may be taken for granted "Your excellency is amusing yourself with me, but, but, but,—" and accepting the hand which was so courteously offered to him, he slid off the saddle as well as he could. The Un-named took the reins of Don Abbondio's mule also, and consigned both the animals to the driver, enjoining him to wait there without. Then taking a key from his pocket he opened the small door, made the curate and the woman enter, and preceding them to the staircase, all three ascended it in silence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Lucia had been but a short time awake, she was endeavoring to rouse herself, and to separate the troubled visions of sleep from the remembrances and the images of that reality, which had too close a resemblance to the feverish wanderings of an invalid. The old woman came immediately to her, and with a forced humility in her manner, said, "Ah! have you been asleep? You might have slept in the bed, I told you so, so often last night." Receiving no answer, she continued in a tone of spiteful entreaty, "Come, eat something, be prudent. How ill you behave! you ought to eat something, or when he returns, he will be quarreling with me."

"No, no, I want to go away, I want to go to my mother. The master has promised me I shall, he said 'tomorrow.' Where is the master?"

"He is gone away, but said that he would return soon, and that he would do all that you wished."

"Did he say so? did he say so? Well, I want to go to my mother, now, directly."

A noise of footsteps was now heard in the adjoining room, then a knock at the door. The old woman ran to it, and asked, "Who is there?"

"Open," softly replied the known voice. She drew the fastening, and the Un-named opening the door ajar, directed the old woman to come out, and then let Don Abbondio and the good woman go in. He closed the door again, and taking his stand near it, sent the old woman to a distant part of the castle, where he had already sent the other female that had remained in the antechamber.

All this movement, this momentary delay, and the first appearance of persons strange to her, caused a new agitation to Lucia, to whom, if her present state was intolerable, every change was the cause of alarm. She looked, and saw a priest, and a woman; she took a little courage, and looked more attentively—it is him, or it is not him? She recognised Don Abbondio, and remained with her eyes fixed as if she was enchanted. The woman drawing nigh to her, stooped down, and piteously regarding her, took both her hands, as if to caress her, and raise her up at the same time, saying, "Poor dear girl, come, come with us."

"Who are you?" asked Lucia, but without hearing the answer, she turned to Don Abbondio, who was standing near her, with compassion even in his features; again she looked at

him, and exclaimed, "Him! is this him? the signor curate? Where are we? oh poor me! I am afraid I am out of my wits!"

"No, no," replied Don Abbondio, "it is me indeed; take courage. Look here! we are come to take you away. I am your curate himself, come here on purpose, on horse-back—"

Lucia, as if she had re-acquired at once all her strength, jumped up on her feet, looked steadily in both their faces again, and exclaimed, "It is then, Madonna, the blessed Virgin who has sent you."

"I believe, indeed, it is," said the good woman.

"But can we go away from this place? can we go away indeed?" said Lucia, lowering her voice, with a timid and doubtful look. "And all those men—" she continued, with her lips trembling with dread and horror, "and the master—! the man that—! he promised me—!"

"He is here in person, come on purpose with us," said Don Abbondio; "he is waiting for us out of the room. Let us make haste; don't let us keep him waiting; a man of his quality."

He of whom they were speaking, now pushed open the door, showed himself, and came forward. Lucia, who but a short time before was wishing to see him, nay, placing her hope upon no other person in the world, desirous to see him of all others, having now seen others, and heard friendly voices, could not restrain herself from trembling. He, at the first glimpse of that countenance on which, the preceding evening, he had not had the courage steadily to look, and which now was pale, disheartened, and full of distress, by long suffering and abstinence, stopped short at the impulse of terror which she betrayed, he cast down his eyes, and remained an instant immovable and mute, and involuntarily giving an answer to what the poor creature had not said, he exclaimed, "It is true; pardon me!"

"He is come to set you free; he is no longer the same man, he is become good. Do you not hear that he asks you to pardon him?" said the good woman, in Lucia's ear.

"What more can be said? come, hold up your head; don't act like a baby; let us be off as soon as we can," said Don Abbondio to her. Lucia raised her head, looked at the Un-named, and observing his face directed to the ground, and his countenance full of confusion, was seized with a mingled feeling of comfort, gratitude, and compassion. "Oh, sir!" she said, "may God return this mercy to you!"

"And may he reward you a thousand fold for the consolation your words impart to me."

He turned now to the door, opened it, and went out first. Lucia, quite revived, followed him, leaning on the woman's arm, and Don Abbondio came last. They descended the staircase, and reached again the small door at the court-yard. The Un-named opened it, went to the litter, opened the door, and with a gentleness that partook of timidity, (two new inclinations in him,) lifting Lucia by the arm, assisted her to get into it, and then her companion. He then took the bridles of the two mules from the driver, and assisted Don Abbondio to mount.

"What great condescension!" exclaimed the curate, and got on the mule's back in a much more active manner than he had done before. As soon as the Un-named was seated, they proceeded on. His front was now raised aloft, and his countenance had reassumed its accustomed expression of command. The ruffians whom they met on the road, perceived clearly in his features the evidence of some great thought, of an extraordinary solicitude, but they could not comprehend, and were unable to penetrate any farther. Nothing was yet known of the great change that had been operated in him, and it is most certain that not one of them would have conjectured it. The good woman had drawn the curtains of the little windows of the litter, and taking Lucia's hand in an affectionate manner, began to comfort her with words of compassion, congratulation, and tenderness. And perceiving, as well on account of the weariness she experienced from her sufferings, as from the confusion and strangeness of passing events, that the poor girl could not properly estimate the joy of her deliverance, she said every thing to her to impress it in a more lively manner upon her mind, in order to disentangle and clear up her confused thoughts. She told her the name of the place they were at, and of the village they were going to.

"Indeed," said Lucia, who knew it was but a short distance from her native place, "Oh, most holy Madonna Virgin, I thank thee! my mother! my mother!"

"We will send immediately for her," said the good woman, who was not aware this had already been done.

"Yes, yes, God will reward you for it—and you, who are you? how did you come—?"

"Our curate sent me," replied she; "for God has touched the heart of the owner of the castle, (blessed be God!) and he came to our village to speak to the cardinal archbishop, who is on a visit there now, that dear man of God; and he has repented him of all his sins, and wishes to change his life. He told the cardinal that he had caused a young innocent girl to be carried off—that was you—in concert with another person who had not the fear of God on him, but the curate did not tell me who it was."

Lucia raised her eyes to heaven.

"Perhaps you know," continued the good woman. "Well, the cardinal then thought, that a young girl being in the case, it was best to send a female to keep her company, and he told the curate to find one; so the curate came to see me, and through his goodness—"

"May the Lord recompense you for your charity."

"Only think of all this, my poor young girl!

And the curate told me I must try to keep up your spirits, and encourage you, and make you understand how the Lord has miraculously saved you——"

"Oh, yes! miraculously, indeed, through the intercession of the virgin."

"Be, then, of good courage, and pardon him who did this wrong to you; be thankful for the mercy God has shown to him, and pray for him. You will not only do what is pleasing to God, but you will open your own heart by it."

Lucia answered by a look which expressed her assent as clearly as words could have done, and with a sweetness that words could not have communicated.

"That's an excellent girl!" continued the woman, "and your curate also being at our village, (there are so many of them, from all the neighborhood round, enough to make four general assemblies,) his excellency, the cardinal, thought of sending him too, in company, although he has been of very little service. I had heard he was but a poor sort of creature, but I could'nt help seeing upon this occasion, that he was as helpless as a new hatched chicken in a basket of tow."

"And he——" asked Lucia, "he who is become good—who is he?"

"How? don't you know?" said the good woman, and named him.

"Oh, merciful Lord!" exclaimed Lucia. That name, how often had she heard it repeated with horror in some story, where it stood in the place that the hobgoblin occupies in other stories! And now, to think only that she had been in the power of such a terrible man, under his pious care; the thought even of such a dark danger, and of such an unforeseen redemption, to think only who that face belonged to that seemed to her so terrible, it moved, and humbled her so much in her heart, that she was in a sort of ecstatic transport, and kept exclaiming every now and then, "Oh, mercy!"

"It is a great mercy to be sure!" said the good woman. It will be a great blessing for half the people, all round here. Only think how many people were in such a dread of him! And now, as our curate has told me—and then just to look in his face, you see he is become quite a saint; how soon these works of grace ——"

To say that this good woman did not feel a good deal of curiosity to know a little more distinctly something about the great adventure in which she found herself taking a part, would not be the truth. But we must say to her credit, that restrained by a respectful compassion for Lucia, and feeling to a certain extent the gravity and dignity of the charge with which she had been entrusted, she did not even think of putting an indiscreet or idle question to her: every thing that she said during the ride, was intended to comfort and encourage the poor girl.

"God knows how long it is since you have eaten any thing!"

"I really don't remember when—it is some time."

"Poor thing! Do you feel the want of something now?"

"Yes," replied Lucia, with a faint voice.

"When we get to my house, thanks be to God, we shall find something directly. Cheer up, we are not far off."

Lucia fell languidly back in the litter as if she was drowsy, and the good woman let her repose.

For Don Abbondio, certainly, this return was not as distressing as the previous ride, but neither was it by any means a journey of pleasure. As soon as his great fright had left him, he began to feel quite light; but other uneasinesses soon began to annoy him, as when a huge tree has been blown up by the roots, the ground remains naked for some time, until other plants grow up. He had become more sensitive about what was to come, and in his thoughts both of the present and the future, he found plenty of matter to torment himself with. He experienced now, much more than in going, the inconvenience of that manner of traveling, to which he was very little accustomed, especially in the descent from the castle to the bottom of the valley. The driver, in obedience to a sign from the Un-named, kept his beasts at a good pace, and the mules kept behind in single file at the same rate, so that it happened at certain steep places, poor Don Abbondio, as if a lever had been put under him, was thrown upon the mule's neck, and in order to keep his seat, was obliged to catch hold of the saddle; still he did not dare to request them to go slower, and in fact was wanting to get out of the neighborhood in the shortest time possible. Besides, when the path went on one of those elevated ridges, near a ravine, the mule, like all his race, seemed, out of spite, always to keep on the dangerous side, and to have a pleasure in walking on the very margin of the precipice, so that Don Abbondio had a succession of perpendicular peeps below him, every one of which had a fatal appearance. Thou, too, he said in his heart to the beast, thou hast that cursed inclination to choose the most dangerous path, when there are so many safe ones! And then he drew the bridle on one side, but it was all in vain. So that, according to custom, worrying himself with anger, and with fear, he suffered himself to be led at the pleasure of another. The bandits now did not alarm him as much as they did before, as he was more satisfied about the intentions of their master. But—he reflected—if the news of this great conversion should get spread whilst we are still here, who knows how these fellows will receive it! Who knows what may grow out of it! They might take it into their heads that I was come here to play the part of a missionary! Heaven forbid such a thought! They would make a martyr of me! The sternness of the Un-named did not annoy him any more now. To keep those horrid looking

physiognomies in order, thought he, will take nothing less than my friends here besides me. I know that, to be sure; but what have I done that I must be here amongst such a set of ruffians?

Having descended the hill, they at length got out of the valley. The front of the Un-named became more clear; Don Abbondio, too, began to look more natural; he drew out his head that had got imprisoned betwixt his shoulders, stretched out his arms and limbs, erected himself somewhat more, and became quite a different man; he breathed more freely, and now, with his mind a little quieted, began to think upon more remote dangers. What will that devil, Don Rodrigo, say? Will he be content to have his nose put out of joint in this way? Will he put up with all this, and with the jokes that will come after? I warrant you this will be a bitter pill to swallow. Now will be a fit occasion for him to play the devil in reality. We shall see whether he has a grudge against me or not, for having been obliged to take a part in this ceremony. A man that could find it in his heart to send a brace of his devils to make me cut such a figure in the middle of the road, now, Heaven knows what he may take it into his head to do. With his most illustrious excellency, Monsignor, he will hardly think of being revenged, he is too great a concern to be managed, he will have to bite the bridle there. But the poison will be working in him, and somebody will have to pay for it all. What is the end of all such affairs? Why, the blows always come down, and the rags fly about in the air. Lucia, his most illustrious excellency will, no doubt, put in some safe place; that other poor devil, Renzo, that got into such a scrape, has now got out of it; he has had his share of the matter, and here I am, the only rag left. What a barbarous thing it would be, if after so much trouble, and so much agitation, and without getting any credit by it, I should be obliged to bear all the consequences. What will his excellency, Monsignor, do to defend me, after thrusting me into the matter in this way? Will he prevent that hang gallows serving me another trick worse than the first? He has so many things in his head! He takes hold of so many things! How can a man attend to every thing at once? The fact is, they often leave things in a worse state than they find them! Those that go about doing good, they do it in the gross, and when they think they have done it, they are content, and never trouble themselves with thinking about what is to come after. And those that have a taste for going about to do evil, are more diligent; they attend to every thing till there is an end to the whole matter; they never can rest, because the canker is always gnawing at them. Must I go and tell that scape grace that I came here by the express command of his most illustrious excellency, and not of my own accord? Does not this look like taking sides with iniquity? Oh, merciful heaven! I? take sides with iniquity! I, that it is driving about the world at this rate! No, no, it will be better to tell Perpetua exactly how the matter is, and let her consider what is to be done. And how, if Monsignor should take it into his head to make some great to do about this affair, make it uselessly public, and lug my name right into it. I must look to this, and if, when we arrive, he has left the church, I'll go and make my bow as quiet as I can, and if not, I'll leave my apologies, and get home as quick as I can. Lucia wants no assistance, there is no need of my presence, and after so much fatigue I may well pretend to go and get some repose myself. And then—Monsignor might take it into his head to know the whole story, and it might fall to my share to tell the whole story of the marriage. That would cap the concern. And if he should pay a visit to my parish?—Oh, let what will happen, I'll not be looking a head for sorrow, I have enough on my own hands now. I'll go and shut myself up in my house. Whilst Monsignor is in these parts, Don Rodrigo won't have the face to do any mad thing—and afterwards—oh! oh! I see I shall have trouble enough in my latter days.

The party arrived before the functions of the church were over, and passed again through the crowd, which was not less excited than before. It then divided. The two cavaliers turned into a small square on one side, at the bottom of which was the parsonage, and the litter went towards the dwelling of the good woman.

Don Abbondio kept his word; scarce had he dismounted when he paid the most extravagant compliments to the Un-named, and intreated him to apologise to Monsignor, and state that urgent affairs required his return home. He then went to look after what he called his horse, which was his stick, that he had left in a corner of the room, and took his departure. The Un-named remained waiting until the cardinal should return from church.

The good woman, having placed Lucia in the best seat, in the best place of the kitchen, was busied in preparing her some refreshment, refusing, with a rustic and cordial kindness, her reiterated thanks and excuses.

She quickly placed some dry branches beneath a pot which she had hung over the fire, and where a fine capon was swimming; she soon made it boil, and filling a porringer containing some pieces of bread, with the broth, presented it to Lucia. When she saw the poor girl taking comfort at every spoonful, she congratulated herself cordially that this had not happened on a day when the cat was not on the hearth. "All are doing their best today," she said, "to spread a table, except those poor creatures who have enough to do to get a little bread made of beans, and a little buckwheat pudding; but today they are all hoping to have something from such a charitable personage. Thanks be to God, we are in this case; we get along with my husband's trade, and a little we have of last year; so, in the mean-

time, eat with a good heart, the capon soon will be ready, and then you shall have something more substantial." Taking the little porringer up, she busied herself in getting things ready for the family dinner.

Lucia, somewhat reinvigorated, and in much better spirits, began to put her dress in order, an instinctive habit with her of cleanliness and propriety. She arranged and reknotted her tresses upon her head, which had been loose, and in disorder; she arranged her handkerchief on her bosom, and around her neck. Whilst doing this, her fingers came in contact with her rosary, which she had hung round it, she gave a glance at it, and an instantaneous tumult arose in her mind. The remembrance of her vow, till then kept down by so many agitating sensations, suddenly arose, clearly and distinctly before her. All the powers of her mind, scarce recalled into action, were again at once overpowered; and if her mind had not been prepared by a life of innocence, of resignation, and of faith, the consternation she experienced at that instant, would have produced despair in her. After the tumult of such thoughts as words cannot give utterance to, the first which presented themselves to her mind were—"Oh, poor me, what is it I have done!"

Scarce had she thought the words, when she felt a dread within her. All the circumstances attending her vow came to her mind; her intolerable anguish, her despair of all human succor, the fervor of her prayer, the fulness of the feeling with which the vow had been made, and, having obtained grace now, to repent of her promise, appeared to her a sacrilegeous ingratitude, a perfidy towards God and the Virgin; it seemed to her as if such a faithlessness would bring down upon her new and terrible misfortunes, amidst which she would not be able to hope, not even in her prayers; she hastened, therefore, to renounce that momentary reluctance to her vow. Taking her rosary reverently from her neck, and holding it in her trembling hand, she confirmed and renewed her vow, asking, at the same time with earnest supplication, that strength might be granted to her to keep it, and that she might be spared those recollections, and those occasions, which, if they did not move her mind, might at least distract it. The absence of Renzo, without any probability of his return, that absence which hitherto she had esteemed such a bitter misfortune, seemed to her a dispensation of Providence, who had ordered the two events to concur to one end; she endeavored, therefore, to find consolation in one of them against the other. Besides, she imagined to herself that the same Providence to complete his work, would find means to console Renzo, to make him forget—But scarce had she permitted such a thought to take a place in her mind, when it became all tumult again. The poor girl, feeling that her heart was again going to betray her, began again to pray, again to confirm herself, again to struggle, and rose from the conflict, if the expression can be permitted, as an exhausted and wounded conqueror does from the enemy he has subdued.

In the meantime the trampling of feet, and a joyous sort of cry, were heard. It was the younger part of the family, returned from church. Two little girls and a boy came jumping into the room: their curious eyes were turned upon Lucia, and then they rushed to their mother, and got round her. One asks who the unknown guest is, how did she come there, what did she come there for? Another begins telling her mother all the wonders she had seen; to all and to every thing they said, the good woman answered, "Be quiet, be quiet." Then, at a more moderate pace, but with a cordial sort of eagerness beaming from his countenance, the father of the family makes his appearance. He was, if we have not already stated it, the tailor of the village, and of a great part of the surrounding country: a man who knew how to read, and in fact who had more than once read the Legendary of Saints, and the Royal Knights of France, and who passed amongst his neighbors for a man of talents and science; praises, however, that he modestly declined, only saying that he had missed his vocation, and that if he had attended to study and learning instead of many others—! with all this, the best creature in the world. Having been present when the curate proposed to his wife to undertake that work of charity, he had not only given his approbation, but would have had added some persuasion, if it had been necessary. And now that the church service, the pomp of the rites, the concourse of people, and above all, the sermon the cardinal had delivered, had exalted his kinder feelings, he had returned to his house with an anxious desire to know how the affair had succeeded, and whether the poor girl had been saved.

"See there," said the good woman to him on his entrance, pointing to Lucia, who blushing, arose, and began to stammer out an excuse; but going to her, with a welcome and gay manner, he exclaimed, "Welcome! welcome! You are the blessing of God upon this house. How happy I am to see you here! You was sure to come to good port, for I never knew the Lord begin a miracle without ending it well; but I am happy to see you. Poor girl! But it is a great thing to have had a miracle performed on one!"

Nor was he the only one who had given that designation to the occurrence, because he had read the legendary: throughout the country and all around, it was spoken of in no other terms, as long as the memory of it endured, and to tell the truth, with the accessories that got connected with it afterwards, it was a designation that might well be given to it.

Drawing near to his wife, who was taking the pot from the hooks over the fire, he said softly to her, "Has every thing gone very well?"

"Capitally: I will tell thee afterwards."

"Ay, ay, when it is convenient."

The table being ready, the mistress of the house now led Lucia to it, and made her sit down, and having separated a wing from the fowl, placed it before her; then seating herself and her husband, both of them exhorted their modest and abashed guest to take courage and eat. The tailor began at the first mouthful to talk with great emphasis, notwithstanding the interruptions he met with from the children, who ate their dinners standing round the table, and who, it must be confessed, had seen too many extraordinary things to play the part of listeners all the time. Having described the solemn ceremonies, he proceeded to talk of the miraculous conversion. But what had made the greatest impression upon him, and to which he most frequently reverted, was the sermon of the cardinal.

"To see him there, before the altar," said he, "a man of his quality, just like a curate.—"

"And that gold thing he had on his head—" said a little girl.

"Hold your tongue. To think, I say, that a man of his quality, and such a learned man, who, as they say, has read every book there is, a thing that no other man ever did, not even in Milan; to think that he should know how to adapt himself to talk about such things, so that every body should understand him."

"I knew what it was," said the other little chatterbox.

"Hold your tongue there: what didst thou know, I should like to hear?"

"I knew he was preaching instead of the curate."

"Hold your tongue, I say. I am not talking of those who know something, such as they are obliged to understand; but the dullest, and the most ignorant felt the force of what he was saying. To be sure you may go and ask them to repeat his words, and they would not be able to remember a syllable, but the feelings, they have it all here. And then, without mentioning the name of that personage, how well they comprehended that it was him he was talking of; and then to understand him, it was quite enough just to look at him when the tears came into his eyes—all the people in the church began to cry."

"So they did father," said the little girl, "but what were they all crying for just like children?"

"Hold your tongue, I say. Ay, yes! there's some hard hearts in this country. And then he proved clearly, that although there is a dearth, it is our duty to be thankful to the Lord, and to be content; do all that we can, be industrious, help ourselves, and then be content; because it is no disgrace to suffer, and to be poor, its only a disgrace to commit evil. And these are not mere words, every body knows that he lives just as if he was a poor man, and takes the bread out of his own mouth to give it to the distressed, although he might enjoy all the good things of this world better than any body else. It's then a man gives real satisfaction to hear him talk, not like so many others, with their "do what I tell you, and not what I do"—and then he proved that even those who are not amongst the very greatest of all, if they have more than they have occasion for, are bound to relieve those who are in want."

Here he stopped, as if he was overcome by a thought. He hesitated a moment, then made up a plate of the victuals upon the table, added a loaf to it, put the plate in a towel, and taking it by the four corners, said to the oldest girl, "Take this here;" then putting into her other hand a flask of wine, he added, "go to the widow Maria, leave these things there, and tell her it is to make merry with her little ones. But mind and do it handsomely, and not as if you was bestowing charity on her. And say nothing if you meet any body, and mind you don't break the things."

Lucia's eyes became swollen, she felt in heart a reviving tenderness; from the first this conversation had relieved her more than any sermon expressly intended for consolation could have done. Her mind attracted by those descriptions, those pictures of pomp those movements of compassion and wonder, seized with the enthusiasm of the narrator, forgot for a moment the painful reflections about herself, and still returning to them, became fortified against them. The thought even of the great sacrifice she had made, not that the bitterness of it had passed away, was still mingled with an austere and solemn joy.

In a short time the curate of the place entered, and said that he had been sent by the cardinal to get some news of Lucia, and to inform her that Monsignor would see her in the course of the day; he then returned many thanks from him to the worthy pair. All these moved and touched them in the liveliest manner, they could not find words to express their feelings for such condescension from a personage of his rank.

"And your mother, she is not arrived yet?" said the curate to Lucia.

"My mother!" exclaimed she. And hearing that he had sent for her by the orders and forethought of the archbishop, she drew her apron to her eyes, and shed a flood of tears, which continued to flow for some time after the departure of the curate. When the tumultuous affections which that announcement had awakened, gave place to more composed thoughts, the poor girl remembered, that the approaching happiness of again seeing her mother, a happiness so unlooked for a few hours before, she had expressly implored during those very hours, and had almost made a condition of her vow. *Take me safe back to my mother*, she had said; and those words now distinctly reappeared in her memory. She strengthened herself now more than ever in the determination to preserve her vow, and bitterly reproved herself again for the regret,

and the sorrow she had entertained on that account for an instant.

Agnes, whilst they were talking of her, was, in fact, but a short distance off. It may be easily supposed in what state of mind the poor woman was at receiving such an unexpected invitation, and at a message necessarily so indistinct and confused; of a danger, but a dreadful one, that was now over, of a gloomy care which the messenger neither knew how to explain, nor could give the details of, and for which she had no sort of suggestion in her antecedent ideas. After thrusting her hands into her hair, and often exclaiming, "Oh, Lord! Oh, holy virgin!" After putting various questions to the man, none of which he could give answers to, she hurriedly got into the wagon, continuing to make the same vain inquiries whilst they were on the road. At a particular part of the road they met Don Abbondio, who was coming on step by step, and at each step planting his stick before him. After an exclamation on both sides, they both stopped, and she got out of the wagon, when they drew apart to a small chestnut grove by the road side. He there gave her information of every thing he knew and had seen. The matter was not very clear, but at least Agnes became assured that Lucia was safe, and she breathed again.

He then wanted to enter upon another subject, and to give her long instructions how she should conduct herself with the archbishop, if, as it was probable, he should desire to see her and her daughter; and that above all things she must not mention the marriage—. But Agnes perceiving that he had nothing but his own interest in view, left him there, without making him any promise at all, indeed without making up her mind on the subject, for she had other things to think of. She therefore pursued her journey.

At length the wagon arrived, and stopped at the tailor's house; Lucia hastily rose, Agnes jumped and ran in, they flew into each other's arms. The good woman, who alone was present, comforted and calmed them, and congratulated them, and then, always discreet, left them together, saying she was going to prepare a bed for them;—that she had the means of doing it, but that in any case, both her husband and herself, would rather sleep on the floor, than that they should seek lodgings any where else that night.

Their first embraces and tears having now somewhat subsided, Agnes desired to know what had befallen Lucia, who sorrowfully related her story. But, as the reader knows, it was a story which no one was perfectly acquainted with, and to Lucia herself there were parts, there were obscure passages, altogether inexplicable. Especially that fatal combination of circumstances, of the terrible carriage being there in the road, exactly at the moment when Lucia was passing by, upon a very extraordinary occasion. Both the mother and daughter were lost in conjectures about this, without ever suspecting the truth, or approaching it in the least degree.

As to the principal author of the plot, neither of them could do less than suppose it to be Don Rodrigo.

"Ah! that black monster! firebrand of hell!" exclaimed Agnes, "but his hour will come. God will reward him according to his works, and then he too will feel."

"No, no, mother, no!" said Lucia, "Do not wish him any evil, do not wish it to any body! If you only knew what it is to be in suffering! If you had only experienced it! No, no! let us rather pray to God and the virgin for him; that God may touch his heart, as he has already done to this other poor gentleman, who was once worse than him, and who is now a saint."

The dread that Lucia experienced in recurring to such recent and cruel remembrances made her stop short more than once, she said she had not resolution enough to go on, and after shedding many tears, with difficulty was able to speak again. But a different feeling made her hesitate at one part of her story, that where she had made her vow. The apprehension that her mother might reprove her as imprudent and rash, or that, as she had done in the affair of the marriage, her mother might bring forwards some liberal rule to govern conscience by, and might endeavor to persuade her to be influenced by it; or that the poor woman might tell it in confidence to somebody, if only for advice, and thus give it publicity; the very thought of this made Lucia ashamed; she felt a present intolerable shame, an inexplicable repugnance to speak on the subject, and all these considerations together were the cause that she preserved silence on that important matter, proposing in her heart first to consult with father Christopher. But what were her feelings when making inquiries respecting him, she learnt that he was no longer at Pescarenico, that he had been sent away to a very distant country, a place that had a certain name.

"And Renzo," said Agnes.

"He is in safety, is he not?" said Lucia hastily.

"That is certain, because every body says so; every body is agreed that he is gone to the Bergamasc country, the precise place we don't know, and up to this time he has sent no account of himself; perhaps he has found no means of doing so."

"Ah, if only he is safe, God be praised!" said Lucia, and turned the conversation. They were now interrupted by another novelty, the appearance of the cardinal archbishop.

He, being returned from church, and learning through the Un-named that Lucia had been happily conducted there, sat down to dinner, with the Un-named on his right, amidst a table full of clergymen, who were unable to satiate themselves with looking on that aspect, so softened without weakness, so humbled with-

out abasement, and with comparing it with the idea they had so long formed of the physiognomy of that personage.

When dinner was over, the two again retired together, and after a conversation which lasted much longer than the first, the Un-named returned to his castle, upon the same mule which he had rode in the morning. The cardinal then calling the parish curate, told him he wished to be conducted to the house where Lucia was staying.

"Oh! Monsignor," the curate replied, "do not think of it, I will send immediately to the young girl and her mother, if she is arrived, to come here; the good people of the house likewise, if Monsignor wishes."

"I wish to go myself to see them," Federigo answered.

"There is no occasion for your excellency to incommode yourself, I will send for them directly, it's a thing done in a moment," insisted the officious curate, (a good sort of person nevertheless) not perceiving that the cardinal desired by that visit to do honor to misfortune, to innocency, to hospitality, and to his own ministry at the same time. Still expressing the same intention, the curate bowed and proceeded.

As soon as they appeared in the street, every one who saw them, went to them, and in a short time people gathered from every quarter, opening a long line for them to pass, and following them in a dense mass. The curate kept saying, "Come, come, go back, keep out of tne way, indeed! indeed!" but Federigo said to him "Let them alone, let them alone," and proceeded on, now raising his hand to bless the people, now lowering it to caress the children that were near him. Thus they reached the house and entered it, whilst the crowd surrounded it on every side. In this same crowd was also the tailor, who had kept following on with the rest, with his eyes and his mouth wide open, not knowing where they were all bound. But when he so unexpectedly saw it stop there, it may be imagined he was not very backward in pushing through, and in calling out, "Let him pass through that has a right to pass," and so got in.

Agnes and Lucia heard an increasing tumult in the street, and whilst they were thinking what it could be, the door was thrown open, and the purpled dignitary with the curate appeared.

"Is that her?" said the cardinal; the curate bowed assent, and he went to Lucia, who stood with her mother, both of them immovable and mute with surprize and bashfulness. But the tone of his voice, his looks, his deportment, and above all his words, soon encouraged them, "Poor maiden," he began, "God has permitted you to be exposed to a great trial, but he has also clearly shown you, that his eye was kept upon you, and that he had not forgotten you. He has brought you into safety, and has made you the instrument of a great work, to show his great mercy to one individual, and to send comfort and relief to many others."

The mistress of the house now entered the room, she, on hearing the noise, had looked out of the window above, and perceiving who was coming into her house, ran as hard as she could down stairs, as soon as she had arranged her dress a little; just at the same moment the tailor also came in. Perceiving that the conversation had commenced, they went into a corner of the room together, where they remained in the most respectful manner. The cardinal, having courteously saluted them, continued to talk with the women, mingling with his consolations some little inquiries, if he perceived in the answers, that he could be at all serviceable to those who had suffered so much.

"All the clergy ought to be like your excellency, and take the part of the poor sometimes, and not put them into difficulties to get out of danger themselves," said Agnes, emboldened by the familiar and kind manners of Federigo, and vexed at the thought that Don Abbondio, after having always sacrificed others, should pretend to prevent their telling their minds, and complaining to one who was so far above him, when by so rare a chance, the opportunity offered itself.

"Say whatever you think," said the cardinal, "speak freely."

"I mean to say, that if our curate had done his duty, the thing would not have happened as it did."

The cardinal now requesting her to explain more fully what she meant, she began to find herself in no small difficulty in the relation of a story, where she had played a part she did not care to acknowledge, especially to a man like him. However, she found out a way of getting round it, and related how the marriage was agreed on, how Don Abbondio refused to celebrate it; she did not suppress his pretext about his *superiors* that he had alleged, (ah, Agnes!) and then went on to relate the attempt of Roderigo, and how being warned of it, they had succeeded in escaping. "But," she concluded, "it was escaping into a new difficulty. If, instead of acting as he did, the curate had honestly told us how the affair was, and had immediately married my two young people, we should all have gone away together, secretly, and afar off, where nobody would have known any thing of it. Thus time has been lost, and things have happened just as they have."

"The Signor curate will render an account to me of this act," said the cardinal.

"No, sir, no, sir," replied Agnes, "it was not for this I told you, don't scold him, it will help nothing, for what is done is done: it's the nature of the man, and if the case was to happen again he would do just the same thing."

But Lucia, discontented with that manner of telling the story, added, "we have done wrong likewise, and it is plain that it was not the pleasure of the Lord that the thing should succeed."

"What wrong can you have done, poor girl?" asked Federigo.

Lucia, in despite of the side looks her mother gave her, told the whole story of the attempt they had made at the house of Don Abbondio, and concluded, saying, "We have done wrong, and God has chastised us."

"Receive at his bands the sufferings you have experienced, and take courage, said Federigo, "for who can be filled with hope and cheerfulness, if not they who suffer, and yet accuse themselves?"

He then asked where her affianced spouse was, and hearing from Agnes (Lucia was silent, hanging down her head, and ber eyes on the ground,) that be had left the country, both felt and witnessed some surprise and displeasure, and asked why he was gone. Agnes stammered out what little sbe knew of the adventures of Renzo.

"I have heard that man spoken of," said the cardinal, "but how could a man, involved in affairs of that kind, be engaged to be married to this young maiden?"

"He was a worthy young man," said Lucia, blusbing, but with a firm voice.

"He was a young man even too quiet," added Agnes, "and this every one knows, even the curate himself. Who knows wbat stories they may have trumped up down there with their cabals? It does not take much to make a poor man pass for a rogue."

"It is too true," said the cardinal, I will inform myself respecting him beyond a doubt." And causing the name and surname of the youth to be given to him, he noted them down. He added, that he should be at their village in a few days, that Lucia could then return without apprehension, and that in the meantime he would think how to place her in some secure asylum, until every thing could be arranged for the best.

Turning, then, to the proprietors of the house, he renewed the thanks which he had already sent them by the curate, and asked them if they would be content to entertain for those few days the guests whom God had sent to them.

"Oh, yes, sir!" replied the woman, with a tone of voice, and a look that signified much more than that dry assent, almost stifled by diffidence. But the husband, warned by the presence of such an interrogator, and by the desire to do himself honor upon an occasion of so much importance, was studying to find out some fine turned answer. He gathered his brows, thrust out his eyes, compressed his mouth, put the bow of his understanding to the full stretch, and braced it up as much as he could. He felt a mass of imperfect ideas and mutilated pbrases within him, but the moment pressed, the cardinal made a sign as if he comprehended the cause of their silence, when the poor man, opening his moutb, said, "Imagine only!" Not another word could he get out. He was not only humiliated for the moment, but ever afterwards the importunate recollection of this unlucky failure, spoiled all the complaisance with which he would bave thought of this great honor. And how many times, looking back to tbat moment, and recalling the circumstance to his memory, did not words, as if in spite, present themselves, that would have been infinitely more to the purpose than that silly "imagine now." But at that precious moment, the sense he exhibited was not worth picking up out of the streets.

The cardinal left the house, saying, "The blessing of God be upon this dwelling."

In tbe evening he asked the curate how he could, in a satisfactory manner, compensate that man, who was certainly not rich, for the charge of his bospitality, which must be burdensome at that particular time. The curate replied, that in truth neither the profits of his trade, nor the rent of a few small fields he possessed, admitted, that scarce year, of his being very liberal to others; but tbat, having laid by something the preceding years, he was in as easy circumstances as any of his neighbors, and could therefore be kind without hurting himself, and that he did it most cordially; and that he thought he might take offence if any money was offered to him as a compensation.

"Probably," said the cardinal, "people may owe him money wbich he cannot collect."

"Most illustrious Monsignor, these poor people pay their debts with the superabundance of their crops; the past year they had none at all, only just enough to maintain themselves, and the present year they have not as much as they want for themselves."

"Well, then," said Federigo, "I will take upon myself to pay all those debts due to him, and you will do me tbe favor to get from him an account of them, and to discharge them."

"It will not be a very large sum."

"So much the better, for you must have amongst you too many of those miserable, and unprovided creatures, who have no debts because tbey have no credit."

"It is too true! we do as well as we can, but we cannot relieve every body in such seasons as this."

"Let him put them down to my account, and pay him well. Truly every thing that does not go to buy bread this year appears to me to be a robbery, but this is a particular case."

We will not close the story of this day, without briefly relating how the Un-named terminated it.

This time the fame of his conversion had preceded him into the valley, had spread itself around, and had occasioned every where, trouble, anxiety, vexation, and murmuring. The first Bravos, or servants (one and the same thing) that he met, he made signs to follow him, and so to all others. All obeyed, uncertain of what was to happen, but with their accustomed submission, and thus, with an increasing retinue, he reached the castle. Those whom he found at the gates, he made signs to come

on with the rest, and entering the court-yard, and going to the centre of it, still seated on his mule, he gave out one of his thundering calls, the accustomed signal which all his people ran to, whenever they heard it. In a moment all those who were scattered about the castle, obeyed his voice, joined the rest of his people, the whole of whom looked at their master.

"Go and wait for me in the great hall," said he, and kept his seat until they departed. He then dismounted, led the mule himself to the stable, and went to the hall. At his appearance, a great whispering that prevailed, suddenly ceased, all drew to one side, leaving a great space vacant for him: there was about thirty of them.

The Un-named held out his hand, as if to preserve the silence his presence had produced, and raising his head, which was conspicuously above the rest of them, he said, "Listen, all of ye, and let no one speak, unless I request him. My sons, the path we have trod until this moment, leads to the bottom of hell. I am not going to reproach you, I am the foremost amongst you, I am the worst of ye all, but listen to what I have to say to you. The most merciful God has called me to change my life, and I will change it, I have changed it; may he do the same with ye all. Know then, and remain assured, that I have resolved rather to die than to do any thing against his holy law. I release every one of you from the wicked orders you have received from me, you understand me; nay, I command you not to execute any thing whatever which you were ordered to do. Be equally assured that no one henceforwards can commit any sort of evil under my protection, or in my service. Whoever chooses to remain here under these conditions shall be as a son to me, and I will be content, at the end of that day when I shall have eaten nothing, to have given to the last man amongst you, the last loaf in the house. He who does not choose to remain, his wages shall be paid to him, and a donative besides; he may depart, but never let him set his foot here again, except when he has determined to change his life; then he shall be received with open arms. Think of it this night. Tomorrow I shall ask each of you, one by one, for an answer, and then I will give you new orders. You may now withdraw, every one to his post, and may God, who has shown this mercy to me, turn your thoughts to what is good."

Here he was silent, and all remained so. Various and tumultuous as were the thoughts that agitated them, no signs were to be perceived of it. They were accustomed to receive the voice of their master as the manifestation of a will that was not to be disputed; and that voice, announcing that his will was changed, did not denote, in any manner, that it was enfeebled. It never even occurred to the mind of any one of them, that because he was converted, that they should offer any resistance to his will, or reply to him as they would to another man. They saw in him a saint, but one of those saints who are painted with their front erect, and a sword in their hands. Besides the awe in which they stood of him, they also entertained for him, (being principally born upon his estate,) the affection of liege men; and they all felt a generous kind of admiration, and that kind of diffidence when in his presence, which the rudest and most petulant spirits experience before a superiority which they have once recognized. What he had now said to them, although it was odious to their ears, was not false, nor altogether strange to their understandings; a thousand times they had ridiculed these notions, not because they utterly disbelieved them, but to drive away by ridicule the apprehensions which a serious reflection upon them might have created. And now, when they witnessed the effect those apprehensions had produced in a mind like that of their master's, there was not one of them who, more or less, was not affected, at least for some time. Those also, who had heard the great news out of the valley, had witnessed, and had related the joy and the boldness of the population, the new favor the Un-named enjoyed, and the veneration which had so suddenly succeeded to their former terror and hatred; so that the man whom they had all looked up to when they had constituted the greatest part of his power, they now beheld the wonder, and the idol of a whole multitude. They beheld him exalted above all others in a manner different from before, but not less so, always the first, always the head.

They remained then confounded, uncertain one of the other, and every man about himself. This one worried himself, and laid plans as to where he should go to find service and an asylum, the other examined himself as to the possibility of his taking up the trade of an honest man; others there where, who moved by his words felt an inclination to change their lives; some without coming to any conclusion, proposed to make the most of it, to remain and partake of the bread now so cordially offered to them, and so scarce, and so to gain time. No one spoke. And when the Un-named, at the end of his address, held up again that imperious hand to motion them to retire, silently, like a flock of sheep, they all moved to the door. He followed them, and standing in the centre of the court-yard, he watched them in the twilight as they dispersed, each to go to his own post. Taking a lantern, he then revisited the court-yards, the corridors, the halls, and all the entrances to the castle; and when he saw that every thing was quiet, he went at length to rest. Yes, to rest, because he was sleepy.

Such intricate, such urgent affairs, though for such a length of time he had been engaged in them, he had never, at any juncture of time, had upon his hands as now, and still he was sleepy. The order, the kind of government established within by him for so many years, with so much care, and with such singular skill and perseverance, he had now

brought into jeopardy with a few words; that unlimited devotion of his people, their readi ness to do every thing; that brigand faith on which he had so long reposed, he had now himself shaken: the means he relied upon he had now converted into a tissue of perplexities, he had introduced confusion and uncertainty into his own house, and yet he was sleepy.

He went therefore to his chamber, drew nigh to the bed where he had suffered so much the preceding night, and knelt down at the edge of it, with the intention of praying. And in a remote and neglected corner of his mind, he found the very prayers he had been taught to say when he was a child; and began to repeat them. The words which had so long been buried and wound up there, came issuing forth one after the other.

It was an undefinable feeling which he experienced; a sweet return to the habits of innocency, a piercing sorrow at the thought of the abyss which he had created betwixt that period and the present one; an ardor to arrive, by works of expiation, to a new conscience, to a state, the nearest to that innocence, to which he never could return; a gratitude, a faith in that mercy which was able to lead him there, and which had given him so many tokens of an intention to do so. Rising from his knees, he laid down, and went to sleep immediately.

Thus terminated that day so celebrated even when our anonymous author wrote, and now, but for him, we should have been ignorant altogether of it, at least of its details: for Ripamonti and Rivola, quoted by us, say only, that that very remarkable tyrant, after his interview with Federigo, changed his life in a wonderful manner, and persevered in the change.

How many persons are there who have read those two authors? Fewer even than those who will read our book. And who knows if even in the same valley—if any one had the inclination and the ability to look for and to find it—any trace or confused tradition of the fact would be found? So many things have taken place since that time.

CHAPTER XXV.

The following day, in Lucia's village, and in the whole territory of Lecco, nothing was talked of but her. The Un-named, the archbishop, and one other individual, who although desirous enough of his name being in men's mouths, upon this occasion would willingly have had it less so; we mean to speak of Don Rodrigo.

Not that but before this time men were wont to talk of his doings, yet it was always cautiously and secretly done; two persons must be very well acquainted with each other, before they would venture to converse on that subject; and even then, not with all the feeling they were capable of: for men, generally speaking, when they cannot express their indignation without much danger, not only do not fully evince it, or even suppress it within themselves, but absolutely do not feel it to the same extent. Now, however, who was there who could restrain himself from talking and reasoning about sucn an astounding fact, in which the hand of Heaven was manifestly seen, and where two such remarkable personages, appeared so conspicuously? One in whom such a resolute love of justice was united to such great authority; the other, where tyranny itself in person, appeared to be humiliated, and the very head of the whole host of Bravos had come as it were to lay down his arms, and his occupation. Compared with these, Don Rodrigo dwindled into comparative insignificance. Then it was, that all had time to comprehend what it was to torment innocence in order to dishonor it, to persecute it with such impudent perseverance, with such atrocious violence, and with such abominable schemes. Upon this occasion, they went into a review of many other of this nobleman's exploits, and spoke of them openly, just as they thought, every one emboldened by finding all of the same opinion. A universal murmur and indignation was expressed, cautiously however, on account of the Bravos which he kept around him.

A good portion of these public animadversions, fell upon his friends and courtiers. The Signor Podesta came in for his full share, a man who was always deaf, and blind, and mute, where the deeds of that tyrant were brought in question; but they were careful not to talk of him where it would readily reach his ears, for he too had the birri at his command. With the Doctor Azzecca-garbugli, who had nothing but caballing and talking to help him, they were not so cautious, or with the fry of small courtiers, like him; they were pointed and frowned at, so that for a while they esteemed it best not to show themselves in the public square.

Don Rodrigo, thunderstruck by such unexpected news, so different from the intelligence he expected to receive every day, and every moment, kept close in his palace, alone with his Bravos, for two whole days, chewing his venom, the third he went to Milan. If he had had nothing to apprehend but the discontent of the people, perhaps, since things had gone so far, he would have remained on purpose to brave them, and even to seek an opportunity to make an example of some of the boldest of them; but what drove him away, was the certain intelligence he had received, that the cardinal was coming into his neighborhood. The count uncle, who knew nothing of the whole history of the matter but what Attilio had told him, would have certainly expected upon such an

occasion, that Don Rodrigo should have waited first upon the cardinal, in order that a distinguished public reception should be given to him; it was too evident there was but a small chance for that. He would not only have expected it, but he would have insisted upon having a very minute account of it, as it was a most important occasion to display the high consideration in which the name of his house was held by a dignitary of the first rank. To avoid so odious an embarrassment, Don Rodrigo, rising one morning before day, got into his carriage with Griso, with other Bravos outside, before and behind, and having left orders that the rest of the family should follow him, he went off like a fugitive, as (will it be permitted us to elevate our personages a little by some illustrious comparison) Cataline did from Rome, raging and swearing that he would return in other guise to wreak his vengeance.

In the meantime, the cardinal went on visiting, one every day, the parishes situated in the territory of Lecco. The day that he was to arrive at Lucia's village, a great part of the inhabitants went on the road to meet him. At the entrance into the place, close to the cottage of our two females, there was a triumphal arch, constructed with stakes placed transversely, covered with straw and moss, and set off with green boughs of holly, full of bright red berries: the front of the church was covered with tapestry; from every window coverlids and sheets were spread out; children's swaddling clothes, were arranged like flags, every thing they had, that was fit to make, well or ill, a figure of superfluity. Towards vespers, (the hour at which Federigo always arranged to arrive at the church he was visiting) those who had remained at home, old men, women, and children in still greater numbers, went out also to meet him, some in files, some in a body, preceded by Don Abbondio, uneasy amidst all this festivity, from the noise that stupified him, the buzzing of the people up and down, who, as he said, made him giddy to see them, and from a secret fear, that the women might have been gossiping, and letting something out about the marriage.

And now the cardinal appeared, or to speak more correctly, the crowd amidst which he was, in his litter, with his suite near to him: for of all this nothing could be discerned, save a sign in the air, above all their heads, a portion of the cross carried by the chaplain on his mule. Those who accompanied Don Abbondio, hastened on in great confusion to join the others, and he, after calling out to them several times, "gently, in files, what are you doing?" turned back vexed, and muttering all the time, "a Babel, a perfect Babel," got into the church which was empty, and remained there waiting.

The cardinal advanced, giving benedictions with his hand, and receiving them back from the mouths of the people, whom his suite had quite enough to do to keep a little back; as Lucia's countrymen, they were desirous of making extraordinary demonstrations to the archbishop, but the thing was not easily done, since it was an old custom, wherever he went, for all to do every thing in their power. Indeed, at the very commencement of his episcopacy, at his first solemn entrance into the cathedral, the press of the people behind him was such, that he was in some danger of his life, and some gentlemen near him, had drawn their swords to frighten and keep the mob off. So rude and violent were they in those days, that even in their demonstrations of good will to a bishop in his church, and to make much of him, it was necessary to do every thing but kill him. And indeed the interference of those gentlemen would have been insufficient, if two courageous and stout priests, had not raised him up in their arms, and carried him all the way from the gates of the temple, to the very foot of the great altar. From that time to the present, in so many episcopal visits that he made, his first entrance into the cathedral, may, without speaking lightly, be enumerated amongst his pastoral fatigues, and indeed amongst the dangers he had escaped.

He got into this church also as well as he could, went to the altar, and there, having prayed a short time, addressed, according to his custom, a few words to those around him, expressive of his love for them, of his desire for their salvation, and of the manner in which they should prepare themselves for the functions of the succeeding day. Having withdrawn to the house of the parish priest, amongst other things he had to confer with him, he spoke of Renzo, asked what sort of man he was, and what his conduct had been. Don Abbondio said that he was a young man rather quick tempered, a little self-willed, and somewhat passionate. But to the more precise and special inquiries that were made, he was obliged to answer that he was an honest man, and that he himself could not comprehend how he could have committed so many extravagances in Milan, as were reported around.

"And the young girl," said the cardinal, "does it appear to you that she might return now to remain in safety in her own house?"

"At present," replied Don Abbondio, "she can come and remain, just as she likes; but," he added with a sigh, "it would be necessary that your most illustrious excellency should be always present, or at least in the neighborhood."

"The Lord is always present," said the cardinal; "as to the rest, I will think about placing her in some secure asylum." He then gave orders to send off the litter early in the morning, with an escort, to bring the females.

Don Abbondio was delighted that the cardinal should have spoken to him of the young pair, without asking him why he had refused to marry them. He knows nothing about it, then, said he to himself. Agnes has not blabbed—what a miracle! They will have to see

him again, but I must give them some more instructions. The poor man was not aware that Federigo had not entered upon that subject, expressly because he intended to speak to him of it at length upon a more convenient occasion; and before reproving him as he deserved, he was desirous of knowing his reasons.

But the good prelate's cares for the safety of Lucia, were become superfluous; since he left them, circumstances had arisen, which we shall now relate.

The two women, in the few days they had to pass under the hospitable roof of the tailor, had resumed, as much as things admitted of, each her accustomed mode of life. Lucia bad immediately asked for some work to do; and as she had done in the monastery, kept at work with her needle, in a back room, far from observation. Agnes went out a little, and sometimes also sat down and sewed by her daughter. Their conversation, though somewhat melancholy, was affectionate; both were prepared for a separation, for the lamb was not in safety so near the wolf's den, and when was this separation to terminate? The future was obscure, impenetrable, for one of them especially. Still, Agnes comforted herself with indulging in conjectures about it. Renzo, if nothing sinister had happened to him, would soon contrive to send some news of himself, and if he had found work, and a good situation, if (and how was that to be doubted?) he still preserved his faith to Lucia, why could they not go and stay with him? Frequently she entertained her daughter with these hopes, to whom, it would be difficult to say, whether it was more painful to listen, or to be obliged to answer. She had always kept her great secret to herself; and uneasy and displeased with herself at having concealments from so good a mother, yet invincibly restrained her modesty and the various apprehensions we have alluded to, she suffered the days to pass without speaking of it. Her plans were very different from those of her mother, or, more properly speaking, she had no plans at all; she had abandoned herself entirely to Providence. She sought, therefore, to avoid conversations of this kind, by making no answers, or by saying in general terms, that she had no longer either hope or desire for any thing in this world, save to be united again to her mother, and often tears opportunely came as a substitute for words.

"Dost thou know why it seems so to thee?" said Agnes. "It is because thou hast suffered so much, and it seems to thee as if things would never get right again; but leave it to the Lord, and if—let only one ray of sunshine come, only one, and then thou wilt tell me whether thou hast any hope for any thing or not." Lucia kissed her mother and wept.

Between them and their hosts, a great friendship had sprung up; and where should friendship spring, if not between benefactors and the objects of their kindness, when all of them are virtuous? Agnes, especially, indulged in long gossipings with the mistress of the house. The tailor also amused them with his stories, and some of his moral discourses, and at dinner, especially, be always had some good thing to tell of Buovo d'Antona, or of the fathers of the desert.

A few miles from the village dwelt a singular kind of couple, Don Ferrante and Donna Prasede; their family name, as usual, our anonymous author has kept to himself. Donna Prasede was an old gentlewoman, much disposed to do good, certainly one of the best occupations one can be employed in, but which, like all others, can be spoiled too. To do good it is requisite to know what it is, and, like all other things, we can only know it through our passions, our judgment, and our ideas; all of which are too frequently no better than they should be. Donna Prasede observed that particular rule with her ideas, which it is said we ought all to observe to our friends; she had but a few, and she was very fond of them. Amongst those few, there were, unfortunately, some very ungainly ones, and they were not those she loved the least. It fell out, therefore, that she would set up a thing for a good thing, which was not so, or she would adopt means to produce good, which had a stronger tendency the other way; or think those means lawful ones, which were not at all so, through a supposition in the clouds, that they who do more than their duty, acquire a consequent right to go in that direction. It frequently occurred to her not to see in facts, what really was true, or to see realities which had no existence; and many other things of a similar nature, such as may and do happen to all, without excepting the best of us: but to Donna Prasede they occurred not unfrequently, and not seldom all together.

When she heard of the great affair of Lucia, and the extraordinary things said upon that occasion of the young maiden, she conceived a strong desire to see her, and sent her carriage with an old usher to bring both mother and daughter. Lucia was averse to going, and entreated the tailor who gave her the information, to excuse her. He had willingly done this upon previous occasions, when some of the lower classes had sought to become acquainted with the maiden of the miracle, but obstinacy at this time, appeared to him a kind of rebellion. He made so many grimaces, so many exclamations, said so many things—that people did not act in that way, that it was an important thing, that no was not to be said to great people, that it might be the making of their fortune, and that Donna Prasede, besides other considerations, was herself a saint.—Finally, he said so much, that Lucia was obliged to yield, more especially since Agnes confirmed all his reasonings by adding, "certainly, to be sure."

Having reached Donna Prasede's, she received them with many congratulations and

much kindness, interrogated, advised them, all with a sort of innate superiority, but tempered by so many humble expressions, so much zeal, and seasoned by so much piety, that Agnes almost immediately, and Lucia very soon, began to feel themselves relieved from that oppressive sort of respect which her damely presence had struck them with, and began to feel pleased with it. Donna Prasede, finding soon after, that the cardinal had undertaken to place Lucia in an asylum, became filled with the desire to second, and, indeed, to anticipate such a good intention, and to receive the young girl in her house, where no service should be imposed upon her but needle work, and occupations of that kind. She added, that she would take it upon herself to give information to Monsignor.

Besides the obvious and immediate good here was in an act of this kind, Donna Prasede erceived, and proposed to herself another, erhaps of more importance in her eyes; to rect a head that wanted judgment, and to put in the good way one who stood in mucb need of it: for from the moment when she had first heard Lucia spoken of, she immediately persuaded herself that there must be something wrong, some peccant matter in the composition of any girl, who could form an engagement with a notorious rogue, and a wicked hang gallows, like the man she was attached to. Tell me what company you keep, and I will tell you who you are. Lucia's visit had confirmed her in that opinion. Not that at the bottom, she did not appear to Donna Prasede to be a good girl, but there were a great many things to say. That little head hung down, with the chin buried in her throat, that hesitation to answer, or slow mode of answering, as if she was doing it by force, might denote bashfulness, but looked very much like stubbornness: it did not require much to divine that that little head had some notions of its own. And that blushing every moment, and then sighing: those two large eyes, too, Donna Prasede did not like them at all. She held it as firmly as if she knew it perfectly, that all Lucia's misfortunes were a punishment from Heaven, on account of her attachment to that villain, and a warning to her to forget it; and having settled that in her mind, she proposed to co-operate with Heaven in producing so desirable a result. For, as she often said to others, and to herself, all her study was to second the will of Heaven. Poor Donna Prasede often fell into the sad mistake of supposing her own brains and the will of Heaven to be one and the same thing. However, she was careful not to let out the least hint of her intention; it was one of her maxims, that to conduct a good design to a happy end, the first thing to do, in most cases, was not to let people know what you were aiming at.

The mother and the daughter looked at each other: the painful necessity of their being separated being evident, the offer appeared to both of them most acceptable, if only on account of Donna Prasede living so near to their own village; so that, at the worst, they would be nigh to each other, and could see each other occasionally. Perceiving in each other's eyes that the proposition was mutually agreeable, they turned to Donna Prasede, and thanked her in a tone that indicated their consent. She renewed her courtesies and promises, and said that she would have a letter prepared for them to present to Monsignor. As soon as the women were gone, Don Ferrante prepared the letter, for, being a literary man, as we shall more particularly show, she made use of him as a secretary, upon important occasions. Upon an affair of this rare kind, Don Ferrante put his wits to the stretch, and giving the sketch to his consort to copy, he recommended to her in the warmest terms to mind the orthography, for it was one of the many things he had studied, and one of the very few which he was master of in the whole establishment. Donna Prasede copied it carefully, and sent it to the tailor's. This was two or three days before the cardinal sent the litter to reconduct the women to their own home.

The cardinal was not gone to church, when they arrived and stopped at the parsonage. Orders were given to introduce them immediately. The chaplain, who was the first to see them, instantly went to the women, and delayed presenting them no longer than was necessary to give them a few hurried instructions upon the ceremonials they should observe with Monsignor, and the titles they should give him; a thing he always was very careful in doing, when he thought the cardinal would not hear of it. It was one continued vexation for the poor man, to observe the disorder that prevailed in relation to that matter, about the cardinal. "All owing," as be said, with the rest of the family, "all owing to the too great goodness of that blessed man; all on account of that familiarity which he permitted." And then he would tell, how he had more than once heard with his own ears people say to his excellency, "yes, sir; no, sir."

Just at that moment, the cardinal was conversing with Don Abbondio about the affairs of the parish, so that he had not even a chance to give his instructions to the women, as he was desirous of doing. All that he could do, was, in passing close to them as he went out and they came in, to give them a look, that signified as well as it could, how well satisfied he was with them, and that they must persevere, like clever women, in holding their tongues.

Having made their reverences, Agnes drew from her bosom the letter, and gave it to the cardinal, saying, "it is from the lady Donna Prasede, who says she is very well acquainted with your most illustrious excellency, Monsignor, as naturally all you great people must know each other. When you have read it, you will see what she wishes."

Federigo having read and extracted the essence out of the flowers of Don Ferrante, re-

plied "very well." He knew the people sufficiently to be assured that Lucia was invited there with good intentions, and that she would be safe from the plots and violence of her persecutor. What *he* thought of Donna Prasede's head, we have no precise means of judging. Probably she was not exactly the person he would have chosen for such a purpose, but as we have stated in another place, it was not his custom to undo things which had been done by those whom they concerned. in order to do them better.

"Take this separation too, in peace, and the state of uncertainty in which you are," said he; "encourage the hope that they will end soon, and that God will direct every thing to that end, to which it appears he has wished to lead them, but always hold the firm belief, that whatever is his pleasure, is the best that can happen to you." Giving Lucia individually other proofs of his benevolence, and consoling them both, he blessed them, and let them go. On coming out into the street, they found a swarm of friends of both sexes, the whole commune almost, waiting there to conduct them in triumph to their own house. There was a sort of emulation amongst the women, in congratulating, crying, and asking questions, and all expressed prodigious sorrow when they heard Lucia was going away the next day. The men disputed with one another whose services should be accepted; each one wanted to sit up and guard the cottage that night. Upon this fact our anonymous author thought proper to invent a proverb—If you want a great many friends, contrive to be able to do without them.

So much kindness confounded and stupified Lucia, but substantially it was of service to her, as it distracted her thoughts and her recollections a little, which, even amidst all this noise, struggled within her, at the sight of her door, the little rooms, and every other well known object.

At the sound of the bell, which announced that the church services were soon to begin, all moved towards the church, and this was another walk of triumph for the restored pair.

The service being over, Don Abbondio, who had stepped out to see if Perpetua had arranged every thing well for dinner, was informed that the cardinal desired to speak with him. He immediately went to the chamber of his distinguished guest, who, permitting him to approach, began,

"Signor curate," and these words were addressed to him in such a tone and manner that he saw clearly they were the beginning of a long and serious matter, "signor curate, why did you not join in wedlock this Lucia with her betrothed husband?"

They have emptied the bag, sure enough, this morning—thought Don Abbondio, and stutteringly answered, "Monsignore illustrissimo, no doubt has heard of the confusion that sprung out of that affair; it was so prodigious and so intricate, that even now, no one has been able to see clearly into it, as your most illustrious excellency may judge by the fact that the maiden is here, after so many accidents, as if by some miracle; and the young fellow, after other accidents also, is gone nobody knows where."

"I ask," the cardinal resumed, "if it is true, that before all these accidents you speak of, you refused to celebrate their marriage, when you was required to do so, upon the day that was agreed upon, and your reasons for doing so."

"Truly—if your illustrious excellency only knew—what intimations, what terrible injunctions I have had imposed on me not to speak of it—" Here he stopped, without coming to a conclusion, expressing by gesture that he desired respectfully to hint that it would be an indiscretion to wish to know any further.

"But," said the cardinal, with a voice and countenance more than usually serious, "it is your bishop, who from regard to his own duty, and for your justification, wishes to know from you why you have not done that which, in the regular way, you was under an obligation to do."

"Monsignor," said Don Abbondio, shrinking into as small a compass as he could get, "I did not mean to say—but it did seem to me, that matters being so perplexed, and so old and remediless, it would be useless to stir them up again—nevertheless—but—I say, I know that your most illustrious excellency will not betray one of your poor curates. For only see, Monsignor, your most illustrious excellency can't be every where at the same time, whilst I remain here exposed—still—if I am commanded, I shall speak, I shall tell every thing."

"Speak. I desire nothing but to find you blameless."

Don Abbondio then began to narrate his sad story, but suppressed the principal name, and substituted—a powerful nobleman—allotting to prudence as much as he could possibly afford to do in such a strait.

"And had you no other reason but this?" asked the cardinal, having heard what he had to say.

"Perhaps I have not sufficiently explained myself," replied Don Abbondio. "Under pain of my life, it was intimated to me not to celebrate that marriage."

"And does this appear to you a sufficient reason for the omission of a prescribed duty?"

"I have always endeavored to do my duty, even when it has been very inconvenient to do it; but when a man's life is at stake—"

"When you presented yourself to the church," said Federigo, with a still more serious countenance, "to receive your ministry, did she tell you to be so cautious about your life? Did she tell you that the duties annexed to the ministry were free from all difficulties, or that they had an immunity from danger? or did she tell you, that duty ceased where danger began? Did she not expressly tell you

the contrary? Did she not warn you that she sent you into the world as a lamb amongst wolves? Did you not know that you would find violent men there, to whom that which you was commanded to do, might be displeasing? He from whom we have our doctrine and example, and in imitation of whom, we are named, and even call ourselves pastors, when he came to this world to dispense his great office, did he sanction that opinion, that we were to be cautious about our lives, and to be watchful over them, and preserve them for a few days more upon earth, at the expense of charity and duty? Was holy unction, the imposition of hands, the grace of the ministry, were all these necessary? Why, the world itself is sufficient for a doctrine of this kind. What do I say? Oh shame! The world itself denies this to be true, even the world has its laws, which prescribe good, and which put a limit to evil. It has its own gospel, a gospel of pride and hatred, and does not permit it to be said that the love of life should be urged as a sufficient reason for breaking the commandments. The world will not have it so, and is obeyed. And we, the sons and the messengers of the promise! What would the church be, if this language of yours was held by all your brethren? Where would she be, if she had come into the world with such opinions?"

Don Abbondio held his head down; his spirit felt amidst these reasonings just as a chicken would do in the claws of a hawk, lifted up into an unknown region, into an atmosphere it had never breathed before. Perceiving that it was necessary to make some answer, he said, with a sort of submissive unconvinced manner. "Monsignor. I must be in the wrong. If one's own life is to go for nothing, why then there is nothing to be said. But when one has to do with certain people, with those that are powerful, and won't listen to reason, and are ready to play the Bravo too, I really don't know what is to be gained by going right against them: this is a nobleman that is neither to be conquered nor to be compromised with." "And do you not know, that with us, to conquer, means to suffer for the sake of justice? And if you do not know this, what is it you preach? What are you master of? What are *the good tidings* you announce to the poor? Who pretends, in your calling, that power is to be conquered by power? Certainly it will never upon any day, be asked of you, if you have subdued the powerful; no mission and no means were ever given to you, to that end. But it will most certainly be asked of you, if you have used the means that were entrusted to you, that you might do what you were commanded to do, even when men had the temerity to forbid you to do your duty."

What curious men these saints are—thought Don Abbondio—the amount of all this is, that the loves of two young people are of more importance to him, than the life of a poor priest.—As far as he was concerned, he would have been well satisfied if the conversation had ended there; but he perceived that the cardinal at every pause, seemed to expect an answer, a confession, an apology, something or other.

"I repeat, Monsignor," replied he, then, "that I must be in the wrong—a man can't give himself courage."

"Why then, I may say to you, have you engaged in a ministry, which imposes upon you the task of warring against the passions of the age? But how is it, I would rather say, that you do not suppose, if in this ministry, whatever may have brought you into it, you want courage to fulfil your obligations, how is it you do not know there is one who can infallibly give it to you, if you only ask it of him? Do you believe that all the millions of martyrs were endowed with their courage naturally? that they esteemed their lives as vile naturally? so many in the flower of their age, just beginning to enjoy life, so many old people accustomed to regret that it was drawing to a close, so many damsels, so many mothers? all have had courage, because courage was necessary, and they had faith. Knowing your own weakness, and your duties, have you ever thought of preparing yourself for those difficult scenes in which you might be placed, and where in fact you have found yourself? Ah! if in so many years of pastoral office, you have (and could it be otherwise?) loved your flock, you have placed your whole heart in it, all your cares, all your delight, courage could not be wanting to you at a strait; love is intrepid. If then you loved those who were committed to your spiritual care, those whom you call children; when you saw two of them threatened, as well as yourself, certainly, as the weakness of the flesh made you tremble on your own account, so love and charity must have made you tremble for them. You will have been humbled by your first fear, because it was an effect of your unhappiness, you will have implored strength to drive it away, because it was a temptation: but that holy, and noble fear for another, for your children, that you will not have driven away, that you will have listened to, that will have given you no peace, that will have incited you, constrained you to think, and to do all that was in your power to avert the danger that impended over them—What did all this fear and love inspire you to do? What have you done for them? What have you thought of for their safety?

He stopped as if he expected an answer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

To a question of this kind Don Abbondio—who nevertheless had been considering how he should answer some of a less precise na-

ture,—had not a word to offer. And to tell the truth, even we ourselves, with this manuscript before us, and the pen in our hand, having to contend with nothing but phrases, and nothing to fear but the criticisms of our readers, even we feel a certain repugnance to go on: even we feel rather strange at bringing forward, with so little fatigue, so many fine precepts of fortitude and charity, of laborious anxiety for others, and unlimited devotion of one's self. But reflecting that these things were said by a man who acted up to them, we boldly pursue our course. "You do not answer," resumed the cardinal, "Ah, if you had done on your part, that which charity and duty required, however the results might have been, you might now have been able to answer. You perceive then yourself, now, what it is you have done. In not caring to do that which duty prescribed to you, you have obeyed iniquity: you have given a punctual obedience: she showed herself to you, to signify her wishes, but desired to remain concealed from those, who might have put themselves on their guard, and protected themselves against her; she did not want to have recourse to violence, she only wanted secrecy, that she might mature at her ease her schemes of violence and fraud: she commanded you to transgress and to be silent, and you have transgressed and remained silent. And now I ask if you have not done more than this; you will tell me if it is true that you invented pretexts for your refusal, in order to conceal your true reasons?" Again he stopped awhile, waiting for an answer.

They have told him that likewise, these gossiping women—thought Don Abbondio, who still gave no indications of an intention to answer; wherefore the cardinal continued, "If it is true, then, that you have told those poor friendless creatures that which was not, in order to keep them in that ignorance and darkness, in which iniquity wished them to remain.—Then I must believe it is so, then nothing remains for me but to blush with you, and to hope that you will weep with me. See to what it has led you, (great God! and but now you urged it as a justification) that solicitude for temporal life! It has led you—and freely refute what I say to you, if it appears unjust, and if it is not so, receive it as a salutary humiliation—it has led you to deceive the weak, and to lie to your children,"—only look at this now—said Don Abbondio to himself,—that old Satan there—he was thinking of the Un-named—must have people's arms thrown about his neck, whilst I, merely for a white lie, told to save my own skin too, must have a storm raised about my head. But they are my superiors, and are never in the wrong. It is my destiny to have all the world upon my back, and the saints into the bargain. "I have been wanting," said he; then, aloud to the cardinal, "I acknowledge that I have been remiss, but what was there left for me to do in such an unexpected affair as that?"

"Do you still ask? Have I not told you? Was it necessary for me to tell you? To love, my son, to love and pray. Then you would have felt that iniquity, although she could threaten and strike, had no commands to give; you would have joined, according to the laws of God, those that man wanted to separate; you would have dispensed to those unhappy innocents the ministry they had a right to expect from you: for the consequences, God would have been the guarantee, because his law would have been fulfilled; but obeying another law, you have made yourself responsible for the consequences, and what consequences! But, perhaps, all human remedies were wanting to you; perhaps you thought you had no way of escape open, when you hardly thought, or reflected, or looked around you. Now you can see that those poor young people, if you had married them, would themselves have thought about their owu safety, that they were prepared to fly from the face of their oppressor, and had already fixed upon their place of refuge. But even setting this on one side, did you not remember that you had a superior? How is he possessed of authority to reprehend you for having failed in your duty, if the obligation to assist you to discharge it, is not imperative upon him? Why did you not think of giving information to your bishop of the impediment, which an infamous violence was opposing to the exercise of your ministry?"

Just what Perpetua was saying! thought Don Abbondio rather angrily, to whom, during the whole of this address, the most lively images in his fancy, were the figures of those two Bravos, and the thought that Don Rodrigo was alive and sound, and one day or another, would come back glorious and triumphant, and like a roaring lion. And although the dignitary before whom he stood, his aspect and his language, had an influence upon him, still, the fear they produced in him, did not altogether subdue him, nor prevent a little rebellion in his thoughts, where a predominating idea was, that the cardinal was not going to terminate his reproofs with blunderbusses, swords, and Bravos.

"How is it that you have not thought," pursued Federigo, "that if there was no other refuge open to these persecuted innocents, that I still remained to protect them, to place them in safety, to whom you should have sent them, as derelicts abandoned to a bishop, as belonging properly to him, as a precious part, I do not say of his charge, but of his riches. And as to yourself, I should have been anxious on your account; I should not have been able to sleep until I had felt assured that not a hair of your head could be hurt. Had I not the sure means to protect your life? But the man who was so daring, do you believe that he would not have become less so, knowing that his plots were no longer a secret, that they were known to me, that I was watching, and was determined to use all the means placed in my

power to defend you? Dou you not know that when man promises too often more than can be performed, that he also threatens, not seldom, to do more than he intends? Do you not know that iniquity confides not altogether upon her own strength, but also upon the credulity and the terror of others?"

Just what Perpetua was saying, precisely, thought Don Abbondio, without reflecting that that singular accordance in opinion of what he might and ought to have done, between his own servant and Federigo Borromeo, was a very strong argument against him.

"But you," continued the cardinal, "have seen nothing, nor have wished to see any thing, but your own temporal danger; no wonder that it should have appeared so great to you, when you have overlooked every thing else but it."

"It is because I saw their horrid faces myself," Don Abbondio involuntarily broke out, "it is because I heard what they said myself. Your most illustrious excellency talks well, but, after all, a man should stand in the shoes of a poor priest, and be brought to such a pinch as that."

Scarce had he uttered these words, than he bit his tongue; he perceived that his vexation had carried him too far, and said to himself, now we shall have hail stones—and raising doubtfully his looks to the cardinal, he was astonished at his countenance, which, indeed, he had never been able to penetrate and divine, at seeing it change from a chastising and authoritative expression, to a serious and thoughtful compunction.

"It is too true!" said Federigo, "such is our wretched and terrible condition. It is our duty to exact rigorously from others, that which God alone knows whether we are prepared to do ourselves. It is our duty to judge, to correct, to reprehend, and God alone knows what we should do in the same case, and, indeed, that which we have done in similar cases! But wo is me if I were to assume my own weakness as the measure of another's duty, for the rule of my teaching. Most certain it is, that to doctrine I must add my own example, and not live like the Pharisee, imposing insupportable burthens on others, when he will not even touch them himself. Therefore, my son and my brother, since the errors of those who sit in command are often better known to others than to themselves; if it is known to you, that through pusillanimity, or from any other motive, I have neglected any part of my duty, tell it to me frankly, let me look into it, so that, where I have been deficient in example, confession may not be wanting. Point out to me freely my weaknesses, and then words will come with more authority from my mouth, since you will feel, in a more lively manner, that they are not my own, but that they come from the spirit of him, who knows how to give both to you and to me, the strength necessary to do that which they enjoin."

Oh, what a holy man! But what a worrier he is! thought Don Abbondio; even about himself, he must be groping, and meddling, and criticising, and playing the inquisitor, even about himself. "Oh, Monsignor!" said he, "are you making game of me? Who is there who is not acquainted with the strong heart, and the indomitable zeal of your most illustrious excellency?" Adding, in his heart, it is too much the case.

"I did not seek of you a praise that makes me tremble," said Federigo, "for God knows my failings, and those which are known to myself, are sufficient to confound me. But I had desired, and I fain would, that we should humble ourselves together before him, and confide in him together. I should wish, for the love of you, that you should feel sensible what your conduct has been, and how your speech has been opposed to the law which you still teach, and according to which you must be judged."

"Every thing is put upon my back," said Don Abbondio; "but those persons who have been denouncing me, have said nothing about their getting into my house by treachery, to surprise me, and trump up a matrimony contrary to the rules."

"They have told me that too, my son: but what afflicts and frightens me is, that you still try to excuse yourself, that you think you can excuse yourself by accusing others; that you bring as an accusation against others what ought to be a part of your own confession. Who led them, I will not say into the necessity, but into the temptation of doing what they did do? Would they have had recourse to that illegitimate course, if the legitimate one had not been closed against them? Would they have thought of deceiving their pastor if he had received them with open arms, had aided and advised them? Would they have sought for him if he had not concealed himself? And you blame them, you are angry, because after so many distresses, what do I say, in the midst of their distress, they have uttered a word of complaint to their, to your pastor. That the appeal of the oppressed, the complaint of the afflicted, are odious to the world, is too true; but we! what would it have benefited you, if they had remained silent? Would it have been an advantage to you, that their whole cause should have gone up to the judgment of God? Is it not an additional motive for you to love them, (and how many reasons you have!) that they have afforded you an opportunity of hearing the sincere voice of your pastor, that they have given you the means of ascertaining better, and of discharging, in part, the great debt you owe them? Ah, if even they had given you any provocation, if they had offended, had tormented you, I would tell you (and ought you to wait to be told?) to love them for that very reason. Love them because they have suffered, because they still suffer, because they are yours, because they are weak, because you stand in need of a pardon, to obtain which, reflect how efficacious their prayers may be."

Don Abbondio was silent, but it was no longer the same spiteful, impersuasible silence; he looked like one more disposed to think than to talk. The words which he had heard, contained unexpected consequences, and new applications, but of a doctrine long familiar to his mind, and which was not disputed. The wrongs of another, from which fear for himself had always distracted him, now made a new impression upon him; and if he did not feel all the remorse that he would have liked to produce from the pulpit, (for the same fear was even there with him, executing the office of an advocate defending the wrong side,) still he felt some: he felt a displeasure at himself, and a compassion for others, a mingled sentiment of tenderness and confusion. He was, if the comparison be permitted us, like the moist wick of a candle, which, on being presented to the flame of a torch, cannot be made to light, smoking, fizzing, snapping, but at last is inflamed, and burns either well or ill. He would have accused himself loudly, and would have wept, if it had not been for the thought of Don Rodrigo; yet, nevertheless, he gave sufficient indications of being moved, to admit of the cardinal's perceiving that his words had not been spoken in vain.

"Now," continued he, "one of them a fugitive from his own house, the other on the point of abandoning hers, both with too much reason to remain at a distance, without any probability of their being again reunited here, if, indeed, God designs ever to reunite them; now, too true it is, they have no need of you; too true it is that you have no opportunity of doing them any good, neither can our short foresight conjecture any opportunity for the future. But who knows that God, ever merciful, may not be preparing it? Ah! let them not fly! seek them, be on the watch, pray to him that he may find you one."

"I will not fail, Monsignor, I will not fail, truly," replied Don Abbondio, with a tone of voice that seemed to come from his heart.

"Yes, my son, yes," replied Federigo, and with a dignity full of affection, he concluded, "heaven knows how I should have preferred to hold conversations of another kind with you. We have both of us lived a long time, and God knows how hard it has been for me to visit your grey hairs with reproof, how much more pleased I should have been to console myself with you about our common cares, and our sins, in talking of the blessed hope to which we are already drawing so near. May God grant that what I have said to you may be both for your advantage and mine. Do you not think that he will demand an account of me, upon the great day, for having kept you in an office to which you have so unfortunately been found wanting. Let us redeem the time; midnight draws nigh; the bridegroom is coming; let us keep our lamps burning. Let us present our hearts to God, miserable and empty, that he may be pleased to fill them with that charity which corrects the past, which assures the future, which fears and trusts, weeps and is cheerful. Let us pray that he will give us wisdom; that it may become, in every case, the wisdom of which we stand in need."

Having said this, he moved, and Don Abbondio followed him.

Here our anonymous author informs us that this was not the only interview of this kind which these two personages had, nor Lucia the sole object of their conversation, but that he has confined himself to this, that he might not wander too much from the principal story. And for the same reason, he omits to mention other notable matters, and acts, and sayings of Federigo in the whole course of his visitation; his liberalities, quarrels reconciled, ancient rancors composed between individuals, families, and whole districts, that had either abated, or, as was most frequently the case, were slumbering; nor of the petty tyrants and their bullies that he had quieted for life, or at least for some time: circumstances that occurred more or less in every part of the diocese, where that excellent man made any stay.

He goes on then to say, that the following morning, Donna Prasede came, according to agreement to receive Lucia, and to pay her compliments to the cardinal, who praised her, and recommended her warmly to her care. Lucia tore herself from her mother, with many tears, and again left her cottage, bidding, for the second time, adieu to her village, with that sense of double bitterness which is felt when one leaves a place most cherished of all, and where one can no longer be happy. But this was not the last parting from her mother, for Donna Prasede had announced that she should remain a few days longer at her villa, which was not far from there; and Agnes promised her daughter to go once more, and exchange their more sad and final adieus.

The cardinal was also preparing to go to another parish, when the curate of that where the castle of the Un-named was situated, arrived, and requested to speak to him. Being admitted, he presented a purse and a letter from that nobleman, intreating Federigo to induce Lucia's mother to accept a hundred gold crowns that were in the purse, as a dower for the young maiden, or for any use that might seem proper to them both. He requested him also to tell them, that if at any time, they had reason to suppose he could render them a service, the poor maid knew too well where he resided, and that he should ardently seize upon the opportunity to be useful to them. The cardinal immediately caused Agnes to be called, and told her the commission he was charged with, which she listened to with equal surprise and satisfaction. He presented her the purse, which she, without much ceremony, permitted him to put into her hand, saying, "May God reward him, and please your most illustrious excellency to thank him ever so much. And don't say any thing to any body, for this is a kind of place—

Excuse me—you see—I know that one like you does not go gossiping about things of this kind, but—your excellency understands me."

Gently she went home, shut herself up in her room, untied the purse, and although somewhat prepared, beheld with admiration, all in a heap, and in her own possession, all those bright pieces, such as she had never seen before more than one at a time, and that being rarely. She counted them, took a great deal of pains to put them together, and to make the whole hundred stay one on the top of the other, for every now and then the heap burst and they would slip through her fingers. At last having made a rouleau of them as well as she could, she put them in a linen rag, and having tied them well up with a piece of string, she hid them away in a corner of her straw bed. During the remainder of the day, she did nothing but revolve in her mind designs for the future, and sigh for the morrow. Having got into bed, she remained some time awake, thinking of the hundred bedfellows she had beneath her; and when she got a sleep, she saw them in her dreams. At the dawning of day, she rose, and took the road to the villa where Lucia was.

She, on her side, although her reluctance to speak of her vow was not at all diminished, still had resolved to overcome it, and to unbosom herself to her mother, in that conversation, which for a long time was to be the last.

Scarce were they alone, when Agnes, with an animated countenance, and an under tone of voice, as if any one had been present whom she did not wish to over hear her, began, "I have a great thing to tell thee of," and went on communicating to her the unexpected adventure.

"May God bless him," said Lucia, "you will now be able to be comfortable, and to do some good to others."

"How!" answered Agnes, "dost thou not perceive how many things we can do with all this money? Listen, I have no one but thee, but you two, I can say, for Renzo, since I am talking of it, I have always looked upon as my own son. The matter is, if some misfortune has not befallen him, since he does not send us word even that he is alive. But—bless me, every thing can't go wrong. Let us hope not, let us hope not. For myself, I should have been glad to have left my bones in my own country, but since thou cans't not remain there on account of that scoundrel, and even the thought of his being so nigh, all make my country a bitter residence to me, and with you both I can be happy any where. I was from that time disposed to go with you both, even to the end of the world, and I have always been ready to do it, but without money, what is to be done? Dost thou understand now? The little matter that poor young fellow had laid away with so much pains and economy, justice is come and has made free with; but to compensate, the Lord has sent fortune to us. As soon, then, as he has found out the way to let us know he is alive, and what his intentions are, I will come for thee to Milan, I will come and take thee. In old times I should have thought twice about that, but misfortune makes one dexterous, and clever. I have been as far as Monza, and I know what it is to travel. I will take with me a proper man, a relation, such a one for instance as Alessio di Maggianico, for to tell the truth, there is not such a proper man in the village. I will come with him—the expenses of course we shall pay, and—dost thou comprehend.—"

But perceiving that, instead of being pleased, Lucia was becoming melancholy, and gave evidence of a tender distress that admitted of no consolation, she interrupted her harrangue, and said "but what's the matter with thee? did any body ever see?"

"Poor mamma!" exclaimed Lucia, throwing one arm round her neck, and resting her weeping head on her bosom.

"What is the matter?" anxiously asked the mother once more.

"I ought to have told you before," said Lucia, raising and composing her features, "but I had not the heart to do it Pity me!"

"But speak out then."

"I can no more be the wife of that poor young man."

"How? what?"

Lucia, with her head hung down, her breast heaving, and weeping without shedding tears, like one communicating a thing, at once a misfortune and immutable in its nature, revealed her vow, joining her hands at the same time and asking pardon of her mother, for having concealed it until then. She beseeched her not to speak of the circumstance to any living soul, and to aid her to facilitate the fulfilment of what she had promised.

Agnes was stupified and full of consternation. She wished to complain of the silence observed towards her, but the grave thoughts appertaining to the case, kept down her personal vexation. She wished to reprove her for the act, but it seemed to her like flying in the face of Heaven, and still more when Lucia described to her again, in a more feeling manner than ever, the night she had passed, the dark desolation that hung over her, and the unexpected safety into which she was brought; it was during these moments that her promise had been given, so expressly, and with so much solemnity. Agnes, meanwhile, called up to her own memory, various examples, which she had often heard related, and which she had herself told to her daughter, of strange and terrible punishments that had fallen upon those who had violated their vows to the virgin. After remaining some time in this kind of astonishment, she said, "and now, what dost thou mean to do?"

"Now," answered Lucia, "it is the Lord who must decide; the Lord and the virgin. I have put myself into their hands, they have

not abandoned me up to this time, and they will not abandon me now that—The favor that I ask for myself of the Lord, the only favor after my soul's happiness, is, that he suffer me to return to you, and he will grant it to me, he will grant it to me. That day—in that carriage—ah, most holy Virgin!—those men!—who would have said that they were taking me to him, who would conduct me to where I should be with you the following day?"

"But not to tell your own mother immediately!" said Agnes, still somewhat piqued, but in a tone of tenderness and compassion.

"Pity me, I had not the heart—of what use was it to afflict you before hand?"

"And Renzo?" said Agnes, shaking her head.

"Ah!" exclaimed Lucia, jumping up immediately, "I must think no more of that poor youth. God, indeed, had not destined us—only see how it looks as if he intended to keep us separated. And who knows?—but no, no: the Lord will have preserved him from dangers, and will make him still more happy without me."

"But, nevertheless," replied Agnes, "if it had not been that thou hast bound thyself for ever, as to that, if no misfortune had happened to Renzo, now we have that money, I had found a remedy."

"But that money," replied Lucia, "how would it have come, if I had not passed that night? And the Lord, who has willed that every thing should happen thus, may his will be done." And her words died amidst her tears.

At this unexpected argument, Agnes remained thoughtful. After some time, Lucia, restraining her sobs, continued, "now that the thing is done, we must adapt ourselves to it in good heart, and you, poor mamma, you can aid me, first, in praying the Lord for your daughter, and then—it is very necessary that poor youth should be informed of it. Think of it, have this kindness for me, for you may think about him. When you have found out where he is, let him be written to, find a man—your cousin Alessio, exactly, he is a prudent and charitable person; he has always wished us well, and will not talk to every body about it. Get him to write to him to tell the affair just as it has happened; how I have suffered, and that God has willed it so, and that he must let his heart be in peace, and that I can never, never belong to any body. And make him understand it in a kind way, explain to him how I have promised, and that I have even made a vow—when he knows that I have vowed to the virgin—he has always been a worthy youth—and you, the first news you have from him, write to me, let me know that he is well—and then—never let me know any thing more about him."

Agnes, moved with tenderness, assured her daughter that every thing should be done as she wished.

"I wanted, also, to say something more to you," said Lucia; "that poor youth, if he had not had the misfortune to think of me, this would never have happened to him. He is wandering in the world, they have broke up his occupation, they have taken his property away, the savings that he had made, you know why—and we have so much money! Oh, mamma! since the Lord has sent us so much wealth, and that poor young man, for it is quite true that you looked upon him as yours, just as if he were your own son. Oh, let us divide the money with him, for certainly God will never let us want. Seek for an opportunity by some trust-worthy man, and send it to him, for Heaven knows how much he stands in need of it."

"Well? Why, what do you think of me?" replied Agnes, "I will do so in truth. Poor young fellow! What didst thou think I was so content for, because that money had come? But—I really came here quite full of content, I did. Well, I'll send it to him; poor young man! But he, too—I know what I am saying, certainly money always gives people pleasure when they are in want of it, but this is money that won't make him happy, I am sure."

Lucia returned thanks to her mother for her ready and liberal kindness, with a gratitude and affection, that would have induced any one who had observed her, to suppose that her heart still felt some interest for Renzo; more, perhaps, than she herself suspected.

"And without thee, what shall I do, poor wretched woman?" said Agnes, weeping in her turn.

"And me, without you, my poor mamma? And in a house with strangers? And down there in that Milan!—But the Lord will remain with us both, and will unite us again. In eight or nine months we shall see each other here again, and during that time, and even before it is over, I hope he will have ordered every thing for our consolation. Let us leave him to act. I shall always ask the Madonna to grant me this favor. If I had any thing else to offer her, I would do it, but she is so merciful, that she will grant it to me."

With these oft repeated words of grief, and comfort, regret, and resignation; with requests and assurances of secrecy, and with many tears, after long and renewed embraces, the mother and daughter separated, mutually promising to meet again the succeeding autumn, at the latest: as if it depended upon them to do so, and as people usually do in similar cases.

Meanwhile time kept rolling on, without Agnes being able to get any intelligence of Renzo. Neither letters, nor messages of any kind came from him: of all the people of the district and the neighboring country, of whom she made inquiries, no one could give her the least information.

Nor was she the only person that vainly made these inquiries. The Cardinal Federigo, who had not promised these poor women merely for form's sake, that he would endeavor to get intelligence of the youth, had, in fact,

immediately written to that effect. Being returned from his visitation to Milan, he had received an answer, in which it was stated, that no information could be obtained of the person inquired for; that he had, indeed, been a short time in the country, where he had done nothing to attract observation, but that one morning he had suddenly disappeared. That a relation of his, who had entertained him there, did not know what had become of him, and could only state the various and contradictory reports that were circulating about him; one that he had enlisted to go to the Levant, another that he had gone to Germany, and one that he had perished in crossing a river: that they would keep on the look out, and if any thing more precise should transpire respecting him, they would immediately apprise his most illustrious and most reverend excellency.

Later still, these and other reports were spread about in the territory of Lecco, and consequently came to the ears of Agnes. The poor woman did her best to get at the truth, and to reach the bottom of all of them, but she was not able to get a whit beyond that great authority—People say so—which even in our own days, is esteemed quite sufficient for so many great matters. Sometimes, before one story had been cleverly told to her, some other person came and asserted that there was not a word of truth in it, but by way of compensation began another equally strange and unwelcome. All of them were pure gossiping. The fact was thus.

The governor of Milan, and captain general of Italy, Don Gonzalo Fernandez di Cordova, had expressed a good deal of resentment to the Venetian resident at Milan, because a brigand, a public thief, an abettor in saccage and killing of people, the well known Lorenzo Tramaglino, who, when even in the hands of justice, had excited an insurrection, in order to escape through violence, had been harbored and received in the Bergamasc territory. The resident had replied that he knew nothing of the fact, but that he would write to Venice, that he might be able to communicate to his Excellency such an explanation of the affair as he might be possessed of.

At Venice, they had for a maxim to favor and cultivate the inclination of the Milanese operatives in silk, to transplant themselves into the Begamasc territory, and there enable them to find many advantages, especially that one, without which all others are insufficient, security. But as between two great litigants, something, however small, will always fall to the share of a third person, so Bortolo was confidentially informed, by whom no one knows, that Renzo was not safe where he was, and that he would act wisely in going to some other filature, and even in changing his name for some time. Bortolo understood this kind of latin, offered no objections, but explained the thing to his cousin, and taking him with him in a calash, placed him in another new filature, distant from the other about fifteen miles, and presented him there to the proprietor, who was also a native of the state of Milan, and an old acquaintance of his, under the name of Antonio Rivalto. Notwithstanding the scarcity of the times, the proprietor did not hesitate to receive a workman who was recommended to him as both honest and intelligent, from a man of worth. After trying him, he was entirely satisfied with his acquisition, except that at the beginning it seemed to him that the young man must be very dull by nature, for when they called out Antonio, half the time he never answered.

A short time after, orders were received from Venice by the captain of Bergamo, couched in a calm tone, that he should collect and transmit information, if in his jurisdiction, and especially in such a parish, the person named was to be found. The captain, having made the official inquiries, in the manner he comprehended it was wished for him to do, sent back a reply in the negative, which was transmitted to the resident in Milan, who communicated it to Don Gonzalo Fernandez di Cordova.

There were some inquisitive people, however, who wanted to know from Bortolo, why that young man was no longer in his employment, and where he was gone. To the first inquiry he answered, "Oh! he has disappeared." And in order to appease those who were most persevering, without awakening in them any suspicion of the truth, he amused them, first one and then the other, with the reports we have alluded to, but as things quite uncertain, which he had only heard himself, without having any positive information about.

But when the inquiry was made of him through a commission from the cardinal, without naming him, and with a certain air of mystery and importance, giving it to be understood that it was made in the name of a great personage, Bortolo became still more scrupulous, and deemed it necessary to adhere to his own method of answering such inquiries. Indeed, considering it was for the information of a great personage, he thought it best to communicate all together the various inventions that he had struck off one by one at different periods.

It must not be thought, however, that Don Gonzalo, a nobleman of such high character, really had any personal spite against a poor silk spinner of the mountains; or that, perhaps, having been informed of the irreverence observed, and the disrespectful words said by him, of his Moorish king chained by the throat, he wanted to take revenge on that account; or that he believed him so dangerous a subject that he must be pursued even whilst he was flying, and that he must not be permitted to live even when he was at a distance, as the Roman senate acted in the case of Hannibal. Don Gonzalo had too many great things in his head to agitate himself about Renzo's conduct, and if it has the appearance of being so, it arose from a singular

concurrence of circumstances, through the influence of which, the poor fellow, without meaning it, or without knowing it, then or at any other time, found himself, by a subtle and invisible thread, involved in these too many great things.

CHAPTER XXVII.

More than once we have had occasion to mention the war that was in agitation respecting the succession to the states of the Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, the second of that name, but it has always been done when we were in a very great hurry, so that we have never been able to give more than a flying hint about it. Now, however, for the understanding of our narrative, it is absolutely necessary to give a more particular relation of it. These are matters that whoever has any pretension to history, must be acquainted with: but as from a sentiment of our true position in the scale of importance, we cannot suppose this work will be read by any but the ignorant, so there will be no harm in just saying as much as will give every one a sprinkling of information who may stand in need of it.

We have said that at the death of that duke, the first called in lineal succession, was Carlo Gonzaga, head of a younger branch transplanted into France, where he possessed the duchies of Nevers and Rhetel. He entered into possession of Mantua, and now we add of Monferrato, which in our great hurry we had omitted. The minister of Spain, who was anxious at any cost whatever (we have stated this too) to exclude the new prince from these two feuds, and who to exclude him, found it necessary to proceed upon the right of some other, (for wars entered into without some cause of this kind would be unjust) had declared himself the supporter of the right, that another Gonzaga, Ferrante, the prince of Guastalla, pretended to have upon Mantua; and that which Charles Emanuel I, duke of Savoy, and Margaret Gonzaga, the widow duchess of Lorraine, had upon Montferrat. Don Gonzalo, who belonged to the house of the great captain,* and who bore his name, had made war in Flanders, and being extremely anxious to wage one in Italy, was perhaps the man who most fomented this dispute, in order that it might be undertaken. In the meantime, interpreting the intentions, and anticipating the orders of the minister, he had concluded with the duke of Savoy a treaty of invasion and partition of the Montferrato, and had easily obtained the subsequent ratification of it by the count duke, persuading him that it would not be difficult to get possession of Casale, the best defended point in the share allotted to the king of Spain. He protested, however, in his name, that there was no intention to occupy the country but as a depositary, until the decision of the emperor, who, moved by the instigations partly of others, and partly for his own reasons, had, in the meantime, denied the investiture to the new duke, intimating to him his desire that the territories in dispute should be left in his hands, until the claims had been heard by him, when they would be restored to whom they belonged. To this the duke of Nevers would not assent.

This prince had, also, some powerful friends: the Cardinal Richelieu, Venice, and the Pope. The first of these, engaged at that period in carrying on the siege of Rochelle, and in a war with England, thwarted also by the party attached to Mary de Medicis, the queen mother, who, for some particular reasons, was adverse to the Duke of Nevers, could give nothing but hopes. The Venetians would neither move nor declare themselves before a French army had fallen upon Italy, and assisting the Duke in an underhand way, as well as they could, contented themselves with making protests, propositions, and exhortations, friendly or hostile, according to the occasion, to the court of Madrid, and the governor of Milan. Urban VIII, recommended the Duke of Nevers to his friends, interceded in his favor with his adversaries, and made propositions for a reconciliation; but he would listen to none about taking the field.

The two allies were able, therefore, with greater security, to commence their concerted enterprise. Charles Emanuel, on his side, had entered Montferrat; Don Gonzalo with great alacrity, had laid seige to Casale, but without finding matters as encouraging as he had promised to himself, for there are things besides roses to be gathered in war. The court did not assist him for a long time, with all the means that he asked for: his ally was even too active, for having taken possession of his own share, he went on taking also the part that had been assigned to the king of Spain. Don Gonzalo was as furious as can be conceived; but fearing, that if he made the least noise, the duke of Savoy, as active in negociations and as inconstant in treaties, as he was renowned in arms, would go over to the French side, he therefore was obliged to shut his eyes, to bite the curb, and keep up appearances. The siege, too, went on badly, was protracted too long, and made little progress, owing to the bold and resolute face which the besieged put on, as well as to his forces not being sufficiently numerous; and as some chroniclers have said, to the great number of mistakes he made. In relation to which we leave the truth where it is, disposed, even if the things were really so, to believe that his conduct was so far admirable at least, if it was the occasion of there being fewer persons killed, mutilated, and lamed, and *ceteris paribus*, even only if there were less damage done

* Don Gonsalvo di Cordova.

to the roofs of Casale. In the midst of these troubles, news was brought to him of the insurrection at Milan, which induced him to go there in person.

There, in the account which was given to him, mention was also made of the flight of Renzo, which had created so much noise, and of the true and supposed causes of his arrest; he was also informed that the rebel had taken refuge in the territory of Bergamo. This circumstance arrested the attention of Don Gonzalo. He had been previously informed, that the Venetians had appeared much animated by the insurrection of Milan, that they considered he would be obliged to raise the siege of Casale, and that it was generally supposed he had become serious and desponding: and the more, because soon after the news of the insurrection, they had received the intelligence so ardently desired by them, and so much dreaded by him, of the surrender of Rochelle. Feeling extremely displeased, as a man and a politician, that the oligarchs of Venice should conceive so unfavorable an opinion of his affairs, he sought every opportunity to change their opinions, and to persuade them, by induction, that he had lost nothing of his ancient resolution, since the saying explicitly—I am not afraid—is just saying nothing at all. An excellent way is, to appear to be disgusted, to make complaints, and to expostulate: wherefore the Venetian resident having called to make his compliments, and to fish out, through his countenance and deportment, what was passing in him internally, (mark these politics of the old school!) Don Gonzalo spoke of the tumult lightly, like a man who had already arranged every thing, and then entered upon the affair of Renzo, the conclusion of which has been already spoken of. After which, he gave himself no further trouble about so minute an affair, which, as far as he was concerned, was terminated; and when, some time after, the answer came to the camp at Casale, where he had returned, and where he had something else to think of, he threw his head up and down as a silkworm does when it is looking for the mulberry leaves, and stopped a moment, to recall, in a more lively manner to his memory, a fact of which he retained but a very faint image: he, however, remembered the affair, and even had a fugitive and faint idea of the person concerned, but he soon went to something else, and thought no more of it.

But Renzo, who, from the peep he had been permitted to take in the clouds, had reason to expect any thing but such a benevolent indifference about himself, remained for a while without any other thought, or to speak more plainly, any other study, than how to conceal himself. He made great efforts to send some information to the two females, and to get some back again, but there were two great difficulties in the way. One, that it would have been necessary for him to confide in a secretary, for the poor lad neither knew how to read nor to write, in the extensive sense of the word; and if, when he was interrogated as to that point, as it may be remembered, by the Doctor Azzecca-garbugli, he had answered yes, it really was not a boast, nor a piece of romance, as we say, but was really true, for give him but a little time, and he could read what was printed; as to writing, that is quite another affair. He was then obliged to let a third party into his interest, and into the participation of such a jealous secret: now it was a difficult thing for him to find a person who knew how to write, and in whom he could at the same time confide: in those times such a person was not easily found, and it was the less easy for him in a country where he was without any old acquaintances. The next difficulty was to get a messenger, a man who was going exactly into those parts, who would take charge of the letter, and would really undertake to deliver it: these, too, were necessary contingencies not easily united in one and the same man.

Finally, by looking about and inquiring, he found a person to write the letter, but, not knowing whether they were still at Monza, or where they were, he thought it best to enclose the letter directed to Agnes, in an envelope addressed to the care of Father Christopher, with a couple of lines also to him. The amanuensis charged himself also with forwarding the packet, and delivered it to one who had to pass not far from Pescarenico; this person left it with many careful recommendations at an inn on the road, the nearest to the convent, and in consideration of its being directed to so holy a place, it at last got there, but what afterwards became of it, was never known. Renzo seeing no answer come back, got another letter ready, pretty much like the first, but enclosed it to an acquaintance or relation of his at Lecco. Another messenger was looked for and found, and this time the letter reached the person it was directed to. Away went Agnes to Maggianico, and got her couzin Alessio to read it to her, and having concerted an answer to it with him, which he committed to writing, means were found to send it to Antonio Rivolta at the place of his domicile: all this, however, was not done as quick as we are relating it. Renzo got the answer, and in time replied to it. To be brief, a correspondence was got up between them, not very rapid nor very regular, but kept up by intervals and starts.

But to form a just idea of that correspondence, it is necessary to understand how such things were managed, and indeed how they still continue to be: for in this particular, perhaps very little change has taken place.

The rustic who does not know how to write, and who finds it necessary for him to write, goes to one who understands that art, choosing as well as he is able, amongst those of his own condition, having no great opinion of, and placing little confidence in any body else: he tells him, with more or less order and per-

spicuity, what has happened antecedently, and in like manner explains the thoughts he wishes to be communicated. The literary character, understands a part, and misunderstands a part of what he is told, gives a little advice, proposes some change; says—leave it to me—takes his pen, turns the spoken thought as well as he is able into a written one, corrects it after his own taste, improves it, embellishes it, or sometimes mutilates it, even omits here and there, where it appears to him proper to do so. For, there is no remedy here, he who knows more than the rest will not consent to be a mere material instrument in their hands, and when he engages in other people's affairs, he will make them go as he thinks they ought to go. With all this, the literary party does not always succeed in saying what he wishes to say, he sometimes even says the very reverse; this also happens to us who write for the press. When a letter thus got up reaches the person it was addressed to, who in like manner is not acquainted with A, B, C and company, he carries it to another person who has some intimacy with them, and who reads and explains it to him. Questions however of construction arise, for the person most interested, relying upon his knowledge of preceding facts, pretends that certain words have a particular meaning; whilst the reader relying upon the practice he has in composition, insists that their meaning is quite different. At last it becomes necessary for the person who does not know, to put himself into the hands of the person who does know, and to entrust the answer to him, the which, being got up in like manner, goes to its destination, subject to a similar interpretation. If, in addition, the subject of the correspondence is somewhat jealous, if secret affairs are to be treated of in it, which it is desirable to conceal from a third party, in the event of the letter's taking a wrong course: if, for this reason, things are intentionally stated in an obscure manner, then, however short a time the correspondence may last, the parties conclude by understanding one another, just as formerly two scholastics would do after disputing for four hours upon entelechy. We decline choosing our simily from any thing of modern date, wishing to avoid the disagreeable occurrence of a box on the ear.

Now the case of our two correspondents was exactly the one we have been describing. The first letter written in the name of Renzo contained a great deal of matter. There was the history of his flight from Milan, a great deal more concise, but not quite as well composed as we flatter ourselves ours has been, as well as an account of his present situation and circumstances; from which Agnes, as well as her drogoman were very far from collecting a lucid and perfect notion. Mysterious advice—change of name—perfect security, but a necessity of remaining hid: things by themselves not very familiar with their intellects, and in the letter communicated partly in cypher. Then there were inquiries of the most impassioned and distressing kind about Lucia, with dark and sorrowful hints concerning the reports that had reached Renzo. Finally it contained uncertain and distant hopes, plans cut out for the future, and promises and entreaties meantime for the preservation of mutual faith, not to lose patience and courage, but to wait awhile.

This having passed over a time, Agnes found a trusty means of sending an answer to Renzo, with the fifty crowns Lucia had assigned him. At the sight of this gold he knew not what to think, and with his mind agitated with a wonder and astonishment, that admitted of no complacent satisfaction, he ran in search of the person who wrote for him, to get the letter interpreted, that he might have the key of such a strange mystery.

In the letter, the secretary of Agnes, after some lamentations at the little perspicuity contained in his letter, began to describe, at least in quite as lamentable a manner, the tremendous story of *that person*, (this was the term used) and then explained the affair of the fifty crowns. The next thing spoken of was the vow, but this was done with some paraphrase, finishing, in more direct and clear terms, with advice to set his heart at peace, and to think of her no more.

Renzo trembled, shook with rage, and was furious at what was read to him, as well as what he could not comprehend; and could hardly restrain himself from taking revenge on his interpreter. Three or four times he had the fatal epistle read to him, sometimes comprehending it better, and sometimes that which seemed clear to him at first, appearing all at once obscure. In this feverish passion he insisted upon the man's instantly taking up the pen, and answering it. After the strongest expressions that can be imagined of compassion and terror for the adventures of Lucia, "write," exclaimed he, dictating, "write, that I will not set my heart at peace, that I never will do so, and that that is not advice to give to a young fellow like me; and that I never will touch the money, that I will put it by, and keep it for her dower; that the maiden is mine, and that I know nothing about promises; and that I have always heard say, that the virgin is applied to, to help those in tribulation, and to obtain favors from, but never to help others to break their words and to affront people; this I have never heard: and that this can't be, and that with this money, we can live here, and that if I am in some trouble now, it is a storm that will soon pass over." Agnes got the letter, and answered it, and the correspondence was continued in the manner we have described.

Lucia, as soon as her mother was enabled, by some means or other, to send her word that such a one was alive and in safety, and acquainted with what had taken place, felt a great relief, and desired nothing more than that he should forget her, or to speak more

precisely, that he should think about forgetting her. On her side, a hundred times a day she made a similar resolution in relation to himself, and adopted all sorts of means too to carry it into effect. She kept indefatigably at work, and sought to occupy her whole mind with it: when the image of Renzo presented itself, she would endeavor to say or sing mentally her orisons. But that image, just as if it was maliciously disposed, did not come boldly forwards, but insinuated itself, as it were, behind all the others, so that the mind was not aware of its being present, until it had been for some time introduced. Lucia's thoughts were frequently with her mother; how could it be otherwise? and then this ideal Renzo came softly in to make a third, just as he himself in his own person, had often done before. In the same manner, with all persons, in all places, in all past remembrances, he was sure to be there. And when the poor girl sometimes permitted herself to build castles in the darkness of the future, he appeared also, if it was to say nothing else but—I shall form no part of these plans.—But if not to think at all of him was a desperate undertaking, still she could try to think less of him, and less intensely than her heart would have desired. Up to a certain point she succeeded in this, and would have succeeded much better if she had been left to herself. But there was Donna Prasede, who being deeply engaged in an attempt to root him out of her mind, had hit upon the goodly expedient of talking constantly to her about him. "Well," said she to her, "are we thinking any more about that young fellow?"

"I am thinking of no one," replied Lucia.

"Donna Prasede was not to be satisfied in that way, and replied that facts were better than words, and went into a long harangue about the ways of young women. "When," said she, "they give up their hearts to one of these debauched young fellows, (and that is their natural propensity,) they never will give him up; when a respectable party is in the case, a reasonably honest, well settled man, then if any difficulty arises, they become immediately reconciled; but when they can't have one of these dissolute fellows, they are incurably wounded." Then she began a panegyric upon the poor absent young fellow, the villain that had gone to Milan to deliver it up to pillage and slaughter; and wanted too to make Lucia confess all the villanies he had committed in his own country.

Lucia, her voice trembling with shame, with grief, and with as much indignation as could exist in her gentle mind, and humble fortune, asserted and declared, that in his own country, the poor young fellow had never had any thing said of him but what was good; she wished, she said, that some one was present from that quarter, that Donna Prasede might ask them on that subject. Even about his adventures at Milan, respecting which she could not enter into particulars, she defended him, simply from the perfect knowledge she had of him, and of his conduct from his childhood. She defended, or proposed to defend him, for the pure sake of charity, for the love of truth, and of Renzo, as her neighbor; at least these were the moving causes of her zeal, as she explained them to herself. But Donna Prasede drew new arguments from these apologies, to convince Lucia that she had thrown away her heart entirely upon him. And, indeed, at those moments we positively cannot tell how the matter stood. The unworthy picture the old woman had drawn of the poor young man, awakened, through opposition, in the mind of the maiden, in a more lively and distinct manner than ever, the idea that had been so long formed there by habit, and the remembrances she had with difficulty stifled, unfolded themselves in crowds. The aversion and scorn she now heard connected with his name, called up so many ancient motives for esteem and sympathy. This blind and violent hatred gave new strength to her compassion; and with these feelings who knows how much there might be or might not be, of that more powerful feeling which introduces itself so easily into the mind along with them: what is it not capable of doing, in bosoms, whence it is attempted to be dragged by force. However that may be, Lucia's share of the conversation was in no danger of becoming long, for her words were soon overpowered by her tears.

If Donna Prasede had been moved to treat her in that way, out of some inveterate hatred against her, perhaps those tears would have subdued her and made her silent; but, as she was occupied in doing good, she kept on without being in the least moved; just as groans and supplicating cries may well arrest the arm of an enemy, but not the knife of the surgeon. Having, however, done her duty upon this occasion, from reproofs and scoldings she came to exhortations and to advice, seasoned with a little commendation, just to temper the sour with the sweet, and to produce a better effect, operating upon the mind in every way. These disputes, however, (which were pretty near of the same nature,) did not produce in Lucia any permanent rancor against her cruel lecturer, who, in other matters, treated her very humanely, and even in this was acting for the best. To be sure they left some agitation behind them, some disturbance in her thoughts and affections, so that it required no small effort, and some time, to return to those tranquil feelings she sometimes possessed.

It was, however, fortunate for her, that she was not the only person to whom Donna Prasede was anxious to do good, so that these disputes were much less frequent than they might have been. She had the rest of her family on her hands, all of them heads that wanted more or less to be directed in the right way; and besides all the other occasions that came in her way, or that she found out, to extend the same good offices to many to whom she was under no sort of obligation, she had also five

daughters, none of them at home, but who gave her a great deal more to think about, than if they had been there. Three of them were nuns, and two of them were married; so that it very naturally fell to Donna Prasede to charge herself with the superintendence of three monasteries and two families. A vast and complicated undertaking; which became more arduous on account of the obstinacy of two husbands, encouraged by their fathers, mothers, and brothers, and of three abbesses, flanked by many other dignities and numerous nuns, not one of whom would submit to her superintendence. It was a war, nay, five civil wars in disguise, but vigilantly and actively carried on. In each of these citadels continued attention was kept up to decline her solicitudes, to close the door to all her counsels, to elude her inquiries, and to keep her in the dark as much as it was possible, about every thing that was going on. We do not add to these the contentions and difficulties she met with in the management of concerns still farther removed from her; it is too often necessary to do good to people by force Where her zeal could fully exercise itself, and have the freest scope, was at home: every one there was subject all in all to her authority, except Don Ferrante, with whom things went on in a way altogether peculiar.

A studious man, he liked neither to command nor to obey. That the Signora, his wife, should be mistress of every thing in the house, was all perfectly right; but that he should be her servant, was not at all his intention. And if, when he was asked, he occasionally assisted her with his pen, it was because the occupation was not disagreeable to him, but he knew how to say no, even upon these occasions, when the matter she wanted him to write did not suit him. "Try yourself," he would say, "do it yourself, since the affair appears so plain to you." Donna Prasede, when she had vainly endeavored sometimes to get him out of his track, confined herself to grumbling against him, to call him a man that could not bear to think, a man with a peculiar kind of head, one of your literary heads; a title, which, notwithstanding her spite, she gave him with some complaisance too.

Don Ferrante passed many hours in his study, where he had made a considerable collection of books, a little less than three hundred volumes, all select matter, works of great reputation, in various branches, and in all of them he was more or less versed. In astrology he was very properly esteemed more than a dilettante, for he not only possessed those generic notions, and that common vocabulary of influxes, of aspects, and of conjunctions, but he knew how to talk systematically, and like a professor, of the twelve heavenly houses, of the great circles, of the lucid and dark degrees, of exaltation and dejection, of transits and of revolutions, and of all the most infallible and recondite principles of the science. Twenty years, perhaps, had elapsed, since, in frequent and long disputes, he had maintained the domification of Cardano,* against another learned person, most ferociously attached to that of Alcabizio, as Don Ferrante said—through pure obstinacy. He willingly acknowledged the superiority of the ancients, but could not endure that they should always be preferred to the moderns, even in cases where they were evidently in the right. He knew, also, with more than mediocrity, the history of the science, and could cite, when it was necessary, the most celebrated predictions which had come to pass, and could reason in a subtle manner, and with some erudition respecting other celebrated predictions which had failed, in order to show that the blame was not to be laid on the science, but on those who had not the skill to apply its principles properly.

Of ancient philosophy he had acquired as much as he wanted, and continued making advances in it by the lecture of Diogenes Lærtius. But as those systems, attractive as they are, cannot all be adhered to, and as a man who wishes to be a philosopher, must choose his school, so Don Ferrante chose that of Aristotle, who, as he used to say, was neither an ancient nor a modern, but was a philosopher, and nothing else. He possessed, also, various works of the most learned and subtle of his followers amongst the moderns: he could never be brought to read those writers who were opposed to him, because, as he said, it was throwing away time; neither, indeed, would he buy them, because, as he said, that was throwing away his money. Only by way of exception, he gave a place in his library to those celebrated twenty-two books, *De Subtilitate*, and to another anti-peripatetic work of Cardano, on account of his great value as an astrologer; saying, that he who could write the treatise *De restitutione temporum et motuum cœlestium*, and the book *Duodecim geniturarum*, deserved to be listened to, even when he was talking nonsense. His great defect, he said, was, to have had too much genius, and that no one could conjecture the progress he would have made, even in philosophy, if he had only kept in the right road. As to the rest, though Don Ferrante, in the judgment of the learned, passed for a consummate peripatetic, still it appeared to him that he was not sufficiently indoctrinated, and with great modesty, he said more than once, that the essence, universals, the soul of the world, and the nature of things, were matters not quite so clear, as some were disposed to think.

Of natural philosophy he had made rather a pastime than a study; the works of Aristotle, on this branch of knowledge, he had rather read than studied; nevertheless, with the notices

* These rival systems of domification were sustained with great spirit by their partisans. The arrangement of the heavens was established by means of the horizon of the meridian, and the intersection of four circles of position. The point where the first house began, was at the horoscope, and this was the exact point of the ecliptic in the horizon, at the moment of nativity.—Trans.

he had incidentally got from the treatises on general philosophy, with a peep he had taken into the *natural magic* of Porta, the three Histories, *Lapidum*, *Animalium*, and *Plantarum*, of Cardano; into the Treatise on Herbs, Plants, and Animals, of Alb. Magno, and some other works of less account; he could, upon opportune occasions, entertain persons of cultivated minds, with a relation of the most wonderful virtues, and of the most curious particularities of many simple bodies; describing exactly the forms and the habits of sirens, and of the rare and solitary phœnix, explaining how the salamander can remain in the fire without burning; how the remora* has strength and power to stop instantaneously upon the high seas, a vessel of the largest size; how drops of dew become pearls in the interior of shells; how the cameleon lives upon air; how ice slowly indurated, in long periods becomes rock crystal, and many other most wonderful secrets of nature.

To those connected with magic and witchcraft he had paid the most attention, as appertaining, according to our anonymous author, to a science more general and necessary, in which the facts are not only of great importance, but more easily within our reach, so as to admit of their verification. We have only to add, that in the study of these matters, he had never had any other object than to get information of, and be correctly acquainted with, the most dangerous practices of wizards, that he might protect and defend himself from them. And principally under the guidance of Martino Delrio, (the great man of the science,) he became enabled to talk *ex professo*, of amatory witchcraft, of somniferous witchcraft, of hostile witchcraft, and of the infinite species of it,—which—as our anonymous author says, these three capital branches of sorcery, too much in practice at this day, produce such dreadful consequences.

Not less profound and extensive was his information in relation to history, especially universal history, of which his favorite authors were Tarcagnota, Dolce, Bugatti, Campana, Guazzo, names, in short, of the first reputation.

But what is history, frequently exclaimed Don Ferranto, without politics? A guide that goes on and goes on, without any one following to teach the road to, and consequently throwing away all the labor; just as politics without history is like a person wandering without a guide. He had, therefore, on his shelves a compartment for statistics, where, amongst many of small account, and of secondary rank, were Bodino, Cavalcanti, Sansovino, Paruta, and Boccalini. There were two works, however, that Don Ferrante ranked greatly before all the rest, in this branch; two, that up to a certain time, he was accustomed to call the first, without being able to decide with himself to which of these to give the preference. One of them was Il Principe and I Discorsi of the celebrated Florentine secretary; somewhat of a rogue said Don Ferrante, but very profound. The other was the Ragion di Stato, of the no less eminent Giovanni Botero, —a man of some character—said he, but cunning enough. But just a little before the period of our story, a work had come to light which put an end to all question of pre-eminence, taking precedence, as Don Ferrante said, even over the works of those two matadors; a work where every vice was analysed and distilled as it were, in order to be exposed, as well as every virtue, that they might be practised. That book, so insignificant in its volume, but worth its weight in gold, in a word, the Statista Regnante of Don Valeriano Castiglione, a most celebrated author, of whom it may be said, that the most distinguished men of letters were emulous in his praise, and that the most elevated personages were anxious to get him from one another: of that man whom Pope Urban VIII, honored, as it is known, with magnificent encomiums; whom Cardinal Borghese and the viceroy of Naples, Don Pietro de Toledo, urged to illustrate—the first, the actions of Pope Paul the Fifth, the other, the wars of the Catholic king in Italy, but which they urged in vain: of that man whom Louis XIII, of France, at the suggestion of Cardinal Richelieu, named his historiographer, and upon whom Charles Emanuel, duke of Savoy, conferred the same office; the man, in praise of whom, suppressing other glorious testimonials, the duchess Christina, daughter of the most christian King Henry the IV, asserted amidst many other encomiums, in a diploma, "the certainty of the fame he enjoys in Italy, as the first writer of our times."

But if, in all the above mentioned sciences, Don Ferrante might call himself indoctrinated, there was one in which he had deserved and enjoyed the title of professor—the science of chivalry. He not only reasoned upon it like a master, but being frequently called upon to interfere in affairs of honor, he always gave some decision. He had in his library, and it may be added, in his head, the works of the most celebrated writers on that subject; Paris del Pozzo, Fausto da Longiano, Urrea, Muzio, Romei, Albergato, the Forno primo, and Forno secondo, of Torquato Tasso, of whom he had ready, and could, upon occasion, quote from memory, all the passages from the Gerusalemme liberata, as well as of the Conquistata, that serve to illustrate matters of chivalry. The author of authors, however, in his estimation, was our celebrated Francesco Birago, concurrently with whom he had more than once to give judgment in affairs of honor, and who, on his side, spoke of Don Ferrante in terms of particular esteem. And from the moment the Dis-

* Remora is a name attached by Pliny to a shell fish, of which it is fabulously related, that Periander, the tyrant of Corinth, sending a vessel to Corcyra, with orders to mutilate three hundred noble children, the vessel, on account of the great accumulation of these shells, (probably the balanus,) could make no progress, in spite of a fair wind.—Trans.

corsi Cavallereschi of that distinguished author appeared, he prognosticated, without hesitation, that it would entirely put down the authority of Olevano, and would remain, together with its other noble sisters, as a code of the greatest authority to posterity: a prophesy, says our anonymous author, that every one can see how it has been fulfilled.

From this he passed to polite letters. But we begin to doubt, if truly the reader has any great inclination to go on with him in this review; and if we have not been acquiring the title of a servile copier for ourselves, as well as the right to share with our anonymous author, that of a bore, for having followed him so closely in a matter so foreign to our principal story, and into which he has probably entered so largely only to let out some of his learning, and to show that he was not behind his age. However, leaving what we have said where it is, we will, not to lose our trouble, omit the remainder, in order to get back to the high road of our story; especially since we have a considerable distance to travel on it, without meeting with any of our personages, and a still greater one, before we reach those in whose welfare the reader is certainly most interested, if he takes any interest in the contents of this work.

Up to the autumn of the following year, 1629, all of them remained, some from inclination, others by force, pretty much in the situation where we left them, without any thing happening to them, or being in a position to do any thing worthy of being noted. The season arrived in which Agnes and Lucia had promised to meet again, but a great public event disappointed their wishes; and, indeed, this was one of its most insignificant effects. Other great incidents succeeded to that, without, however, influencing in a remarkable degree, the fate of our personages. At length, new occurrences, more general, stronger, and more extreme in their nature, reached even them, and the most obscure of them, like the driving and wandering force of a mighty whirlwind, which tears up trees by the roots, unroofs houses, carries off the tops of high towers, and bears on the fragments before it: such a storm as lifts up the straws that were hidden in the grass, searches into corners for the withered and light leaves, which a lesser wind had driven there, and drives them about, involved in its force.

Now that the private actions which we have yet to relate, may appear very clear, it is necessary first, to give an account of these public matters, going back a little for this purpose.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

After the insurrection, upon the day of Saint Martin, and the following one, it appears that abundance returned in Milan, as if by enchantment. The bakers' shops were filled with bread, the price was the same as in the most plentiful years, and flour in proportion. Those who during the two days had assisted to get up the uproar, and to do worse, had now, (except a few who were arrested,) only to applaud themselves; and they were not silent, the moment the fear of being taken up had passed away. In the squares, at the corner of the streets, in the taverns, it was an open tripudio,* and boasts and congratulations at having found out the way to make bread cheap. Amidst all this festivity, however, and presumption, there was, (and how could it be otherwise?) an inquietude, a presentiment, that things could not last long in that way. The people besieged the bakers and the flour sellers, as they had before done during that factitious and momentary abundance procured by the tariff of Antonio Ferrer. Those who had a little money before hand, laid it out in bread and flour, storing them away in their chests, in tubs, and in their pots and pans. Thus struggling to enjoy the present advantage, they made the continued duration of plenty, I do not say impossible, since it was so naturally, but even the momentary continuation of it more and more difficult.

At length, on the 15th November, Antonio Ferrer, *De orden de su Excelencia*, issued a proclamtion, in which all persons who had any grain or flour in their houses, were prohibited from purchasing of any body else, whether in small or large quantities; and all other persons were ordered not to buy bread beyond the absolute wants of two days, *under pecuniary and corporal punishment, at the discretion of his excellency;* with intimations to the ancients, and hints to all persons, to denounce transgressors: the judges were ordered to make searches in the houses that were indicated to them, and the bakers at the same time commanded to keep their shops well supplied with bread, *under pain, in case of their failure to do so, of serving five years in the galleys, and even a longer period, at the pleasure of his excellency.* He who can conceive of a proclamation like this being executed, must have a lively imagination; and certainly, if all that were issued at this period were obeyed with precision, it must have been necessary for the dutchy of Milan to have as many cruizers out as Great Britain has at this day.

At any rate, whilst they were ordering the bakers to make so much bread, they ought to have established some regulations for supplying them with the material of which bread is made. It had been contrived (as in times of scarcity people are always studying how to mix up in bread, materials that are consumed in other forms) to mix rice up with that kind of bread called mistura. On the 23d of November, a proclamation appeared, sequestrating to the orders of the vicar of provisions,

* A noisy round dance.

and the council of twelve, one-half of the rice with the husk on, which any one might possess. This kind of rice was then, and is still called, *risone*. The penalty for whosoever should dispose of any without the permission of those officers, was the confiscation of the commodity, and a fine of three crowns for every moggio. A penalty much more humane than the others.

But it was necessary to pay for this rice a price too disproportioned to that of bread. The charge of making good such an enormous difference had been laid upon the city, but the council of decurions, who had taken it upon themselves, deliberated the same 23d November, to remonstrate with the governor, it being impossible to sustain the burthen any longer. The governor, therefore, in a proclamation, dated the 7th December, fixed the price of the rice at twelve livres the moggio. Any one who asked more, or refused to sell at that price, was to incur the penalty of a seizure of the article, and a fine of equal value, *together with a still greater pecuniary fine, and corporal punishment, even as far as the galleys, at the pleasure of his excellency, according to the nature of the case, and the persons it concerned.*

The price of rice without the husk had been fixed before the insurrection, as prboably the tariff, or to make use of that most celebrated denomination in modern annals, the *maximum* of corn; and other grains, in common use, had been fixed by other proclamations, which we have not met with.

Bread and flour, therefore, being kept at so low a price in Milan, whole processions of people consequently came from the country, to provide for themselves. Don Gonzalo, to obviate, as he said, this inconvenience, prohibited, by an ordinance of the 15th December, any one to carry bread out of the city, beyond the value of twenty soldi, under penalty of the bread itself, and twenty-five crowns, *and in case of inability to pay, to have the cord twice given on the public rack, and an increased punishment*, as usual, *at the pleasure of his excellency*. On the 22d of the same month, (we do not perceive why it was published so much later,) a like ordinance came out respecting flour and grains.

The mob had tried to produce abundance by pillaging and burning; the legal authorities endeavored to maintain it by the galleys and the rack. However convenient their respective means were to them, the reader will perceive how little they were suited to the end, and how far they were from contributing to advance it, will soon appear. It is easy to perceive, and not useless to observe, the necessary connexion between these strange contrivances; each of them was an inevitable consequence of the antecedent one, and both of them of the first measure, that fixed the price of bread so much below that which would have resulted from the true state of things. A measure of that kind has always appeared, and must necessarily have appeared equitable to the people, as in other respects simple and easy to put in execution; it is, therefore, natural, that straightened and distressed by dearth, they must wish for it, must implore it, and, if possible, compel the adoption of it. In proportion, too, as the consequences manifest themselves, it becomes necessary for those whose duty it is to remedy them by a law prohibiting men from doing what they were led to do by preceding measures. We shall be permitted here, incidentally, to mention a singular fact. In a country, and at an epoch not distant from our own, the most clamorous and remarkable period of modern history, similar events took place under like circumstances, (similar, it may be almost said, in substance, and nearly in the same order, with the sole difference of the scale upon which they prevailed,) to the disgrace of the intelligence then prevailing in Europe, and in that particular country, perhaps, more than in any other: and all this, chiefly because the great popular mass, whom that intelligence had not reached, was permitted to have its own way so long, and overawe those who made the laws.

Thus, returning to our own affairs, two principal results, to sum up all, had arisen from the insurrection: the destruction and complete loss of provisions during the insurrection, and a consumption, as long as the tariff lasted, extreme and without bounds, of a gay kind too, diminishing the miserable amount of grain, the sole dependance until the next harvest. To these general results may be added the execution of four of the people who were hung as leaders of the revolt, two before the bakery of the grucce, and the others at the head of the street where the vicar of provisions lived.

As to the rest, the historical relations of those times are made so much at random, that no account whatever can be found of how and when that extravagant tariff was abrogated.—If, in the absence of positive information, we may offer a conjecture, we incline to think that it was repealed a short time previous or posterior to the 24th December, which was the day of the execution alluded to. And as to the proclamations, we do not find any respecting provisions, dated after the last we have cited, of the 22d of the same month; whether they have been destroyed, or have eluded our researches; or whether the authorities finally discouraged, if not overcome by the fruitlessness of their remedies, and the irresistible state of the public disorder, did not abandon things to their course. We find, it is true, in the narratives of more than one historian, (inclined as they were to describe great events, more than to note their origin and progress,) a picture of the country and of the city especially, during the winter season and in the spring, when the cause of the evil, the disproportion between the stock of provisions and the consumption, not removed, but increased by remedies which only

supended the effects temporarily; nor yet removed by a sufficient importation of provisions from without, which was opposed by the want of public and private means; the penury of the neighboring countries, the general scarcity, the slowness and the impediments of commerce, and the laws themselves tending to produce and to keep up a forced market: when the true cause of the dearth, at the period tbey are describing, or to be more accurate, the dearth was operating without any restraint, and with all its energy. We here offer a copy of that distressing picture.

At every step, shops shut up, the buildings for the greatest part deserted: the streets presenting an unutterable spectacle, an incessant wretcbedness, a perpetual abode of grief. Beggars, old in the trade, now become the minority, confessedly mixed up and lost in a new multitude, reduced to contend frequently for alms, with those from whom, in former times, they bad been accustomed to receive them. Boys and clerks dismissed from the shops and counting-houses, whose masters receiving no more daily profits, led a life of privation upon their savings or upon their capital. Shopkeepers and merchants even, to whom the the stoppage of business had brought bankruptcy and ruin; operatives of every branch of manufactures, and of every art, the most common as well as the most refined, the most essential as well as the most luxurious, wandering from door to door, from street to street, leaning against the corners, laid down on the side-walks, under the walls of the houses and churcbes, asking alms in a lamentable way, or hesitating between want and the shame they had not yet subdued, meagre, enervated, shivering from abstinence and from the rigor of winter, in their ragged and insufficient clothing, which nevertheless, in many instances betrayed their former opulence, and in whom indications of active and frank habits still appeared through their degradation and listlessness. Mingled in this wretched crowd, and forming no small part of it, were servants discharged by their masters now themselves fallen from mediocrity into want, and many of whom bad served opulent and distinguished personages, that were unable, in a year like this, to keep up their accustomed retinue. And to each of these indigent persons, was added a number of others, dependant for their existence upon their gains—children, females, aged parents, in groups around him who they had depended upon, or dispersed about in other quarters asking charity. There were also, and could be distinguished by tbeir disbevelled ciuffi, the tatters of their ancient gaudy habits, and something in their deportment and gesture, by that mark which custom stamps upon the countenance, with more distinctness in proportion to its rarity, many of the race of Bravos, wbo, in the common wretchedness, having lost the chance of eating the bread of iniquity, went about asking it for mecrcy's sake. Tamed by hunger, contending with the others only in supplications, enfeebled in their bodies, they dragged themselves about that city where they had so often strutted with insolent daring, witb frowning and ferocious aspects, dressed in gaudy liveries, furnished with rich arms, decked with plumes, and tricked out in perfumed finery. Now they humbly stretcbed out the hand, wbich they had so often raised in insolent menace, or to give a traitors's blow.

But tbe densest, the darkest, the most deformed spectacle was presented by the country people, single, in couples, whole families. Husbands and wives, with children in their arms, or carried on their shoulders, leading boys in their hands, and followed by the aged. Some of them, whose bouses had been invaded and plundered by the soldiers, either quartered amongst them, or on the march, had fled in despair; and amongst these were men, who pointed, as a further incitement to compassion, and as a distinction in misery, the livid scars of the injuries they had received, in defending their last resources, or in escaping from a blind and brutal violence. Others who had escaped that particular scourge, but driven away by those too, from which no corner was exempt, the sterility of the ground, and the burdens, now become more exorbitant than ever, to satisfy what is called the necessities of war, were come, and kept coming to the city, as the ancient seat of abundance and munificence. The newest arrived could be known, less by their hesitating gait and strange manner, than by the angry astonishment they bore in their countenances, at such an accumulation, such an overflowing, such a rivality in misery, where they had supposed they themselves would have been esteemed singular objects of compassion, and would have drawn to themselves attention and succor. The others, wbo for more or less time had been accustomed to inbabit and wander about the streets of the city, keeping life together with what they picked up almost by cbance, in so great a disparity between these supplies and their wants bore with them, expressed in their countenances and their actions, a deeper and a more torpid consternation. Various in their dress or rather rags, as well as in their aspect: the pale faces of the low country; the embrowned ones from the plains lying nearer to the hills, the ruddier mountaineers, but all lean and wasted away, their eyes sunk in, their looks senseless yet somewhat haughty, their hair dishevelled, their beards horribly long; bodies inured to fatigue, now exhausted by famine, the wrinkled skin upon their dry arms, their limbs and their bony breasts, which appeared bare beneath their tattered rags. And differently, but not less painful than this spectacle of broken down vigor, was the aspect of a nature sooner subdued, of a langor, and of a more resigned attenuation, in a feebler sex and age.

Here and there were to be seen, in tbe streets and lanes, near the walls, under the eaves, a little straw, and stubble trodden and broke,

mixed up with filthy rags; even this filth was the gift of charitable persons, to serve as beds to some of those distressed creatures, to lay their heads upon during the night; now and then might be seen, even by day light, an individual stretching himself out, his limbs faltering, and breathing short, through extreme fatigue and want: sometimes the couch bore a corpse, and at times some wretched individual would faint away, and remain dead upon the pavement.

Near the prostrate individual, a passenger or a neighbor would be observed, bent down and attracted there by sudden compassion. In some quarters help was administered which was the fruit of a systematic providence, set in motion by one who was rich in means, and accustomed to do good upon a great scale. This was the good Federigo. He had made choice of six priests, in whom a willing and persevering charity was accompanied and assisted by a robust constitution: he had divided them into pairs, and assigned to each pair one third part of the whole city to go through, with porters behind them loaded with various food, with cordials, and other things and restoratives, as well as clothes. Every morning, these three couple went through the streets in different directions, stopped at those whom they fell in with, that were lying upon the ground abandoned, and administered such aid to them as they were susceptible of receiving.

Now and then, an individual in the last agonies, and unable to receive nourishment, had the last aid and consolations of religion administered to him, Those to whom food might be serviceable, had soup, eggs, bread, and wine, given to them; to others, greatly extenuated by long fasting, they gave more nourishing things, and more generous wines, bringing them to, in cases of necessity, with cordials, and with strong vinegar; giving, at the same time, to those who were suffering most for the want of them.

Nor did this benevolence cease here. The good pastor was desirous, whenever it could be done, that the relief should be efficacious, and not momentary. The poor creatures, to whom the first attentions had restored their strength sufficiently to stand up and walk, had a little money given to them by the priests, so that from their coming wants, and in the absence of other succor, they might not relapse into their former prostrate state: for the rest, they sought an asylum and support in some of the neighboring houses. If there were any of them well to do in the world, hospitality, at the recommendation of the cardinal, was, in most cases, granted. In other houses, where the means were not equal to the good will, the priests requested the sufferers to be admitted to board; the price was fixed, and money immediately paid on account. Notice was given to the parish priests of these persons, that they might visit them, and the priests themselves occasionally returned to see them.

It need not be said that Federigo did not confine his attentions to these extreme cases of suffering, nor had waited for so much distress before he had begun to act. His ardent and universal charity felt for every thing, adapted itself to every thing, penetrated where it had never been before, and took as many forms as the various cases of distress themselves. In fact, collecting all his means, using a still more rigid economy, taking those savings which he had destined to other liberalities, now become of secondary importance, he had sought out every method to collect money, in order to employ it in alleviating this penury. He had made extensive purchases of grain, and had despatched a great part of them to the most distressed portions of his diocese, and as the succor he sent was far from being equal to the general want, he sent abundance of salt, "with which," says Ripamonti, relating the affair, "the herbs of the field, and even the young barks of trees may be converted into human food." Grain also and money, he had supplied the parish priests of the city with, through the different quarters of which he went himself, distributing alms. Many indigent families were secretly assisted by him; a great quantity of rice was daily cooked in the archiepiscopal palace, and we have the authority of a contemporaneous writer for saying (the physician Alessandro Tadino, from whose Ragguaglio we shall have frequent occasion to quote hereafter) that two thousand separate portions of it were distributed there every morning.

But these effects of charity, which we may certainly call munificent, when it is considered they came from one man, and from his own means only, (for Federigo declined always being the dispenser of the liberality of others,) these, together with the liberality of other private individuals, numerous, though not equally productive; as well as the assistance which the council of the decurions had assigned for this moment of entire abandonment to misery, committing its dispensation to the tribunal of provisions, were, nevertheless, insufficient and inadequate to the universal distress.

Whilst, through the bounty of the cardinal, a few mountaineers and people from the neighboring vallies had their lives prolonged, others reached the extreme term of indigence: the first having consumed the scanty succors they had received, had returned home. In other quarters, not forgotten, but postponed on account of a less degree of suffering, by a charity compelled to discriminate, the misery became mortal; in every place men were dying; and from every place they were moving to the city. Here, a couple of thousands of starved wretches, but better able to get on and to make room for themselves, had received a portion of soup, sufficient to keep life together for that day; but other thousands remained behind, envying those, fortunate shall we call them, when amongst those left behind, were frequently their own wives, children, and parents? And whilst in three different points of the city

a few of those abandoned even of hope, and drawing to an end, were raised from the ground, reanimated, restored, and taken care of for a while, yet in a hundred others, they fell down, languished, and expired without any assistance or relief. Throughout the day, a confused humming of imploring lamentations was to be heard in the streets; and at night a murmur of general distress, interrupted from time to time by howlings that suddenly broke forth, by loud and long groanings, complaints, by solemn accents of invocation, and by sharp screams.

It is a remarkable thing, that amidst such an excess of suffering, and such a variety of complaints, not one single attempt to stir up an insurrection transpired, at least not the slightest indication of it can be discovered. Yet amongst those who were suffering and dying in that way, there was a great number of men brought up to any thing but to suffer quietly; hundreds of them, indeed, were of the number of those who, on Saint Martin's day, had been loud enough in their violence. Nor is it to be supposed that the example of those four poor unfortunate wretches who had paid the penalty for all, imposed any restraint at present. What influence could, not the presence, but the remembrance of those executions, have upon the minds of a wandering and consolidated multitude, that perceived it was condemned to a slow punishment, and that was already suffering under it? But so, in general, are we men made; we revolt furiously and indignantly at small evils, and prostrate ourselves in silence before great ones; and support, not resignedly, but stupidly, the worst extent of that which, at the beginning, we called quite insupportable.

The void which the mortality made every day in that deplorable crowd, was replaced every day from the country. It was an incessant concourse, first from the neighboring towns, then from the whole county of Milan, then from the cities of the states, and at last from those beyond it. In the meantime, every day some of its most ancient inhabitants were leaving Milan, some to get away from the sight of so much misery; others, driven off the field by new reinforcements of mendicants, left it in a last desperate attempt to seek relief somewhere else, wherever it might be, and where at least the crowd of persons struggling for relief might not be so dense, and pressing. These opposing columns of pilgrims met each other, a spectacle of mutual dread, a sorrowful proof, and a sinister omen, of the end to which they were both hastening. But they went onwards, if no longer with the hope of changing their fortune, at least that they might no longer look upon a sky that was odious to them, and upon places where they had felt so much despair; until some one, all his vital force wasted by abstinence, would drop on the road, and breathe his last sigh, an object of horror to those in the same state with himself, and perhaps of reproach to the other passengers. "I saw," writes Ripamonti, "in the road near the walls, the prostrate corpse of a female; the grass half masticated was dropping from her mouth, and her contaminated lips still retained some action of a desperate effort to relieve herself. She had a small bundle upon her shoulders, and an infant was tied to her breast, which was crying for the breast. Some compassionate persons who were drawn to her, had taken the babe from the ground, and were dandling it, so far fulfilling the maternal office for it."

That contrast of splendor and rags, of superfluity and misery, the common spectacle of ordinary times, was no longer to be seen. Rags and misery had almost invaded every thing, and nothing could be seen differing from them, but an occasional appearance of frugal mediocrity. The nobles appeared in plain and modest clothes, if even they were not in rags; some of them, because the common causes of the misery had so thoroughly changed their own fortunes, or had entirely ruined what had already been deranged; others, either because they feared to provoke by their luxury, the public despair, or were ashamed to insult the public calamity. Those odious and dreaded overbearing tyrants, that were wont to swagger about with an insolent train of Bravos, now went about with their faces to the ground, and with countenances that seemed to implore for peace. Others, who even in prosperity, had been more humane and civil in their deportment, appeared full of confusion and consternation, appalled by the continued spectacle of a calamity, which exceeded not only the possibility of relief, but, as may be almost said, the power of commiseration. Those who had the ability to give relief, were obliged to make a sad discrimination betwixt those suffering the extremes of hunger. Scarce was a compassionate hand extended to some unfortunate wretch, than a crowd of others equally wretched came up; those who had the most strength, pushed forwards to solicit charity with greater urgency. Those who were worn down, with the aged and the children, put out their meagre hands: mothers from a distance lifted up their weeping children, badly wrapped up in heaps of rags, and sinking from extreme weakness in their hands.

Thus passed the winter and the spring. In the meantime the tribunal of health, had remonstrated with the council of provisons upon the danger of contagion, now impending over the city by a wretchedness so concentrated and diffused in it: and had proposed that all these wandering mendicants should be collected into different asylums. Whilst this was under consideration, and they were devising means and methods and places, to carry it into effect, the dead bodies in the streets were increasing every day, and commensurately with this, all the other vexations, the common compassion, and common danger. In the tribunal of provisions another measure was brought forward, apparently easy and expeditious,

which was to collect all the mendicants well and ill, into one place, and that the lazaretto, to maintain them there, and to take care of their health at the public expense. This measure was finally determined upon in opposition to the tribunal of health, which objected, that the collection of so great a crowd would increase the danger it was intended to avoid.

The lazaretto of Milan, (if by chance this story should fall into the hands of any one who has neither seen it, nor heard it described,) is almost a quadrangular building, out of the city, to the left from the oriental gate, separated from the ramparts by the canal, a street of circumvallation, and a ditch which surrounds the lazaretto itself. The two longest sides of the square are about five hundred paces long, the other two about fifteen paces less: all of them on the exterior side are divided into small rooms upon one and the same story: in the inside there is a portico supported with small and thin columns, which runs continuously the length of three of the sides. The rooms were about two hundred and eighty-eight in number; in our days, a great aperture made in the centre, and a smaller one towards a corner of that side which fronts the main road, have destroyed a great number of them. At the period of our story, it had only two entrances, one on the side which fronts the walls of the city, the other on the opposite side. In the centre of the interior space, now quite despoiled, there was and still is a small octagonal temple. The first destination of this building, which was begun in 1489, with the legacy of an individual, and finished with means furnished by the public, and some private donations, was, as its name indicates, to be an occasional asylum for persons attacked with the plague; a fatal disorder, that long before that period, had been wont, and continued long after, to appear thrice, four, six, eight times in a century, now in this, now in that part of Europe, infecting a great part of it, or even overrunning it, as it may be said, from one end to another. At the time of which we speak, the lazaretto was only used as a deposit for merchandize seized in contraband.

To make it ready for its new destination, greater exertions than usual were made, and the purifications prescribed being effected in a great hurry, the merchandise was immediately released. Straw was spread in all the rooms, a stock of provisions, such as could be collected, was laid in, and all mendicants were invited to enter it, as an asylum, by a public edict.

Many went there voluntarily, all that were lying on the ground, in the streets, and the squares, were carried there, and in a very few days, what with one and another, they had collected more than three thousand. But a still greater number was left behind. Either every one was waiting till the others should go, that a small number might monopolize the charity of the city, or from a natural repugnance to being shut up, or the distrust which poor people entertain for every proposition that comes from their superiors, (a distrust always proportioned to the common ignorance of those who entertain it, to the quality of those who inspire it, to the number of the poor and the nature of the edict,) or from their being acquainted with the real nature of the advantage offered to them, or all these things put together, or something else, the fact is that the greater part of them paid no attention to the invitation, and continued to beg and wander about the streets of the city. The authorities perceiving this, judged it best to proceed from inviting to use force. Birri were sent out to drive all the beggars to the lazaretto, and to bind the contumacious. Ten soldi were given to them as a premium, for every person thus forced to the place; so true it is, that even in times of the greatest distress, the public money, some how or other, is always wasted. And although as was supposed, and as even was intended by the measures taken, a certain number of the beggars left the city to live or die in some other place; in liberty, at least, still, so vigorous were the proceedings, that in a short time the number of persons in the lazaretto, including guests and prisoners, was very near ten thousand.

The women and the children, it must be supposed, were lodged in separate quarters, although the memorials of the period do not mention it. Rules and regulations to maintain order were certainly not wanting, but what regulations could be enforced, especially in such times, and under such circumstances, in such a vast and various collection of people; where those who had come voluntarily, and those who had been forced to come, were mixed up together; where those to whom mendicity was an act of necessity, of pain, and of shame, were obliged to associate with those to whom begging was a trade and occupation; where many brought up in the labors of their fields and their shops, were shut up with men brought up in the stews, in taverns, and amongst brigands, in idleness, knavery, mockery, and violence.

How they magaged altogether for lodgings and food, might be sadly conjectured, if we had no positive information, which we have. They had to sleep stowed and crowded together, twenty or thirty of them in one of those small cells, or stretched out under the porticos, upon putrid and offensive straw, or on the bare floor; for, though it was directed that the straw should be fresh and plentiful, and frequently renewed, still it was very scarce, very bad, and was not renewed. In like manner the bread was ordered to be of a good quality, for what administrator has ever directed bad things to be made and distributed? But that which in ordinary circumstances could not have been accomplished, even upon a smaller scale, how could it be done amidst so much confusion? It was said at the time, as we find in the records, that the bread of the lazaretto was adulterated with heavy sub-

stances that were not nourishing, and it may easily be believed that this was not an idle story. Even of water there was a want, I mean to say of good fresb water; the place whence they drew it from was the ditch that went round the walls of the lazaretto, low, almost stagnant, muddy, and become at length what the use and contiguity of such a multitude could not fail to make it.

To all these causes of mortality, which were more active on account of their operating upon diseased and enfeebled bodies, a great perversity in the season may be added, obstinate rains, followed by a still more perverse drought, accompanied by intense beats. To actual evils was added the strong sense of them, the tediousness and the batefulness of imprisonment, the desire to return to old habits, sorrow for dear friends they had lost, uneasiness on account of their separation from others, trouble of mind and dread by turns, so many other feelings of consternation and rage, carried along with them or generated there: then the apprehension and the continuous spectacle of death rendered common by so many causes, and become itself a new and powerful cause of the destruction of life. It is not surprising, therefore, that the mortality should have so increased and prevailed in the lazaretto, as to assume in the eyes of many the character of a pestilence; whether the union and augmentation of all these causes tended to increase the activity of an influence purely epidemic, or whether (as seems to occur in dearths less prolonged and fatal tban this) there actually existed a true contagion, which, in bodies prepared by poverty and unwholesome food, by disease, by filth, by distress and dejection of mind, had found the exact and proper season, the necessary condition of things in fine, to break out, feed itself and increase, (if it may be permitted to an ignorant person to use a language of this kind, after tbe hypothesis proposed by some medical men, and of late with many reasons and mucb caution, by a very ingenious and attentive observer.*) Whether, indeed, the contagion broke out at first in tbe lazaretto itself, as it appears in an obscure and inaccurate account, the physicians of the board of health thought; or whether it existed and was slumbering before that time, (which seems most likely when we reflect of how long standing the general state of poverty had been, and how frequent the mortality,) and being carried there, bad propagated itself with a new and terrible rapidity by the concentration of bodies, rendered more apt to receive it through the increased efficacy of other causes. Which ever of these conjectures may be the true one, the number of deaths in the lazaretto in a short time, exceeded one hundred.

Whilst every thing there was feebleness, anguish, dread, lamentations, and despair, at the tribunal of provisions all was sbame, stupidity, and uncertainty. Consultations were held, the opinions of the tribunal of health were asked, and the conclusion was at length adopted to undo all that had been done with so much preparation, so much expense, and so much effort. Tbe lazaretto was opened, and permission being given to all the poor wretches who survived and were strong enougb, to leave it, they rusbed out in a furious sort of joy.

The old clamor was now heard again in the city, but more unfrequent and feeble; the crowd was again seen, but more seldom, and looking more wretched, from the consciousness, as Ripamonti says, of its numbers being so much reduced. The weakest were taken to Santa Maria della Stella, then a hospital for mendicants, where the greater part of them perished.

Meantime the blessed fields began to turn yellow; the beggars belonging to the county of Milan left the city, every one to his own home, to the much wished for harvest. The good Federigo gave them at parting further assistance, and another proof of his charity: to every countryman who presented himself at the archbishoprick, he gave a giulio,* and a sickle to reap with.

The dearth finally ceased with the harvest: the mortality, epidemic or contagious, decreasing from day to day, protracted itself nevertheless into tbe autumn, and was just disappearing, when a new scourge broke out.

Many important matters, such as are more especially entitled to be called historical, had happened meanwhile. Cardinal Richelieu, having, as has been stated, taken Rochelle, and patched up a peace as well as he could with the king of England, had proposed and obtained, with his powerful influence, in the councils of the king of France, substantial succors for the duke of Nevers, and even persuaded the king himself to conduct an expedition in person. Whilst preparations were making, the count of Nassau, imperial commissary, intimated to the new duke in Mantua, that he must deliver up his states to Ferdinand, or that an army would be sent to occupy them. The duke, who in more desperate circumstances, had refused to accept conditions so hard, and of so distrustful a nature, now encouraged by the promised succors of France, still more obstinately refused, but in terms where *no* was kept out of sight as much as possible, and with proposals of submission somewhat more apparent, but of less costly nature. The commissary left Mantua, protesting that force would be used. In Marcb, Cardinal Richelieu in fact fell down upon Italy, with the king, at the head of an army: a passage was required from the duke of Savoy, and some negotiations entered upon, which were broken off. After a skirmish, where the French had the advantage, negotiations were resumed, and an agreement entered into, in which the duke, amongst otber things,

* Del morbo petecchiale—e degli altri contagi in generale. Opera del Dott. F. Enrico Acerbi, cap. iii.

* A Roman coin.

stipulated that Cordova should raise the siege of Casale, engaging, in the event of a refusal, to join the French and invade the duchy of Milan. Don Gonzalo, thinking to extricate himself upon excellent terms, immediately broke up his camp in the neighborhood of Casale, which a body of French troops immediately took possession of and garrisoned.

It was upon this occasion Achillini addressed to king Louis his famous sonnet,

"Sudate, o fochi, a preparar metalli."

And another, where he exhorted him instantly to march to the liberation of the holy land. But it is destiny that seems to have decided that the advice of poets shall not be followed, and wherever you find any thing in history that has taken place in conformity with their suggestions, you may fairly suppose it was determined before hand. Cardinal Richelieu had, just at that moment, resolved to return to France, on account of affairs that appeared to be very urgent. Girolamo Loranzo, the envoy of the Venetians, used the most powerful arguments to set aside that determination, but the king and the cardinal paying no more attention to his prose than they did to the poetry of Achillini, returned home with the greater part of the army, leaving only six thousand men in Susa, to occupy the pass, and to maintain the treaty.

Whilst the French army was drawing off in one direction, that of Ferdinand, led by the Count of Collalto, was approaching from another quarter, had invaded the Grisons and the Valteline, and was preparing to descend into the Milanese. Independent of the terrors occasioned by the news of such a passage, there came also the sad rumor, that the plague was in that army, of which at that time there was always some vestige in the German troops, according to Varchi, when speaking of that, which a century before had been brought by them to Florence. Alessandro Tadino, one of the conservators of health, (they were six in number, besides the president, four of them magistrates, and two of them physicians,) was charged by the tribunal, as he himself relates in the account already alluded to,* to remonstrate to the governor upon the dreadful danger which impended over the country, if those troops were permitted fo pass on their way to Mantua, as report stated. From the whole conduct of Don Gonzalo it appears that he had a prodigious desire to make a place in history for himself, which indeed could not but occupy herself with his actions, but (as it frequently happens) she did not take the precaution to register an act of his, singularly worthy of attention, and that was the answer he returned to Doctor Tadino under these circumstances. He answered—that he knew not what to determine; that the reasons both of interest and reputation which had put that army in motion, were of greater moment than the danger represented to him; but matters being as they were, they must endeavor to do the best they could, and must rely upon Providence.

To make the best of it therefore, the two physicians of the tribunal of health, (the above mentioned Tadino and senator Settala, son of the celebrated Ludovico,) proposed, in the tribunal, that it should be prohibited under very severe penalties, to purchase any thing whatever from the soldiers on their passage; but it was not possible to make the president comprehend the expediency of such an order. "A man," says Tadino, "of much goodness, who could not bring himself to believe that so many thousand persons could come to their deaths by purchasing commodities of these foreigners." We quote this trait as a singular one of that period, for certainly since tribunals of health have existed, it never occurred to any president to use similar reasoning, if reasoning it can be called.

As to Don Gonzalo, that answer was one of his last acts here, for the untoward results of the war, which had been promoted and conducted in a great degree by himself, were the cause that he was removed from that post the same summer. At his departure from Milan, a thing happened that is noticed by a cotemporaneous writer, as the first of the kind that had occurred there to one of his equals. Coming out of what is called the Palazzo della Citta, in the midst of a great accompaniment of nobles, he met with a crowd of the populace, part of whom stopped before him in the street, whilst the others went behind him, and reproached him with bitter imprecations for the famine they had endured, for the license he had granted, as they said, to export grain and rice out of the country. To his carriage which followed in the rear, they sent worse things than words, stones, bricks, cabbage stalks, with every sort of filth, the ordinary ammunition of frolics of that kind. Driven back by the guards, they retired, but only, in augmented numbers, to run and gain the Ticinese gate, which he was soon to pass in his carriage. When it appeared, with a suite of others, they showered upon them all, with their hands and with slings, a hail storm of stones. The matter went no further.

To supply his place, the Marquis Ambrogio Spinola was sent, whose name had already acquired, in his wars in Flanders, that military celebrity which it yet enjoys.

In the meantime the German troops had received definitive orders to move on to the enterprise of Mantua, and in the month of September it reached the duchy of Milan.

Armies, at that period, were yet for the greater part composed of adventurers, enlisted by condottieri by profession, under commission from some prince or other, and sometimes on their own account, with a view to sell themselves and their troops. It was not so much from a consideration of the pay they were to receive, that men engaged in service

* Ragguaglio dell' origine et giornali successi della gran peste contagiosa, venefica, et malefica, seguita nella citta di Milano &c. Milano, 1648, p. 16.

of this kind, as by the hope of plunder, and all the attractions of licentiousness. There was no exact and general discipline in an army, that would not have harmonized easily with the independent authority of the various leaders. Individually these persons were great disciplinarians; but if even they had been desirous of establishing a universal discipline, it is evident they never could have succeeded, for soldiers of that stamp would have revolted against any innovating condottiero, who had taken it into his head to abolish sackage and plunder, or, at least, would have left him alone to take care of the standard. Besides which, as these princes, in taking, so to say, a lease of those military bands, were more solicitous to have a sufficient number of troops to ensure their undertakings, than to proportion their number to their ability to pay them, which they seldom possessed; so the pay was generally very tardy, and partial, and the plunder of the countries which were the seat of war, or through which the troops passed, became a supplementary settlement tacitly agreed upon. That saying of Wallenstein is little less celebrated than his own name, that it was easier to maintain an army of one hundred thousand men, than an army of twelve thousand. And the troops of which we are now speaking, were in great measure composed of men, who under his command had desolated Germany, in that war famous amongst other wars, on its own account, and from the effects it produced, from the thirty years it lasted, of which number it had now reached the eleventh. His own regiment, too, was there, led by one of his lieutenants. Of the other condottieri, the greater part of them had served under him, and more than one of those were there, who four years after were to aid in bringing him to that deplorable end which every one is informed of.

The army consisted of twenty-eight thousand foot, and seven thousand cavalry. Descending from the Valteline to reach the Mantuan territory, they had to follow, more or less down, the whole route of the Adda, where it twice assumes the lake form, and again where it becomes a river until it reaches the Po, which again they had to follow for a considerable distance; they were eight days in the duchy of Milan.

A great portion of the inhabitants fled to the mountains, carrying with them their most valuable movables, and driving their cattle: others remained, either to take care of the sick, or to protect their houses from being burnt, or to keep an eye on the precious things they had buried under ground: others because they had nothing to lose, and some unprincipled fellows remained behind to steal. When the first squadron arrived at the appointed station, the men dispersed themselves, and pillaged the place, and the whole neighborhood; whatever could be consumed or carried away, disappeared, to say nothing of the destruction they brought upon other things; country houses ransacked, hamlets burnt, blows, wounds, and violations. All sorts of schemes and defences to save their property were frequently useless, and often brought about worse consequences. The soldiers, well acquainted with all the stratagems used in this war, ransacked the corners and holes of every house, and even pulled down the walls; they discovered easily in the gardens where the earth had been newly moved; they ascended the hills to seize the cattle, penetrated the grottoes, guided by some scoundrel, in search of some wealthy person concealed there, stript him, dragged him to his house, and by torturing him with blows, and with threats, forced him to disclose his hidden treasure.

At length they went away, and the sound of trumpets and drums was heard in the distance: a moment of fearful tranquillity now took place, then another accursed beating of drums, and another detestable squeaking of fifes, announced another brigade. These, finding nothing more to plunder, with so much the more fury destroyed and wasted what they found; burning the furniture, the door posts, beams, tubs, casks, and in some places the houses, and with still greater rage seized and ill treated individuals: thus matters went on from worse to worse, for twenty days; the army being divided into that number of squadrons.

Colico was the first place in the duchy these demons invaded, they next threw themselves upon Bellano, from thence they entered and spread themselves in Valsassina, and so reached the territory of Lecco.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Here, amongst the poor terrified inhabitants, we find some persons of our acquaintance.

Whoever did not see Don Abbondio the day that the news of the descent of the army, of its approach, and of its conduct, was spread all at once, can have but a very poor idea of what trouble and dread are. They are coming, they are thirty, they are forty, they are fifty thousand in number: they are devils, they are Arians, they are antichrists; they have sacked Cortenuova, they have set fire to Primaluna; they have laid waste Introbbio, Parturo, Barsio; they have been seen at Balabbio; tomorrow they will be here. Such were the reports that flew from mouth to mouth: and then what running about, what stopping one another, what tumultuous consultations, what hesitation between flying and staying, what assemblings of women, and thrusting of fingers into their hair. Don Abbondio having made up his mind before any body else, and more determinately than any body else, to fly, in every possible way of flying, and to every possible place of refuge, saw nothing but the most insuperable obstacles, and the most frightful dangers in the way. "What is to be done?"

he exclaimed, "Where shall I go?" The mountains, setting aside the difficulties of the road, were not secure; it was already known that the landsknechts* could climb up them like cats, in places where there was scarce any indication of plunder. The lake was broad, the wind was high, and more than that, the greater part of the boatmen, afraid of being compelled to conduct the soldiers or their baggage, had fled with their boats, to the other bank: a few who had remained were gone overloaded with people, and straining with the weight and the storm, were reported to be in danger at every moment. To go to any distance, or to remove from the road which the army was approaching by, it was not possible to find either a calash or a horse, or any other means: on foot, Don Abbondio could not get any great distance, and might be easily overtaken. The confines of the Bergamasc territory were not so distant but that his limbs might carry him there at one stretch, but the report had already got into circulation that a squadron of cappelletti had been despatched in haste from Bergamo, to watch the borders, and hold the landsknechts in respect: these cappelletti were devils incarnate, neither more nor less than the others, and conducted themselves as badly as it was possible for them to do for their share.

The poor man ran about his house, rolling his eyes and half deranged, following Perpetua, to concert some determination or other with her; but Perpetua, entirely occupied with getting together the best things they had, to hide them in the garret, in holes and corners, hurried on, frightened and worried, with her hands and arms full of things, and said, "by and by I will get these things put away in a safe place, and then we will do as other people do." Don Abbondio wanted to detain her, and dispute with her on the various plans to adopt, but she, what with her hurry, the terror that had got possession of her, and the vexation which that of her master gave her, was in a less tractable humor than she had ever been. "The others will contrive something, and we will contrive something too; excuse me, you do nothing but hinder one. Do you think other people have not got a skin to take care of? That the soldiers are coming here just to make war upon your worship? It would be better if you would lend a hand and help a little, instead of getting betwixt one's feet, and crying and worrying so." With this and similar answers, she got rid of him, having determined in her own mind, as soon as she got through that troublesome operation, that she would take him by the arm, as if he were a boy, and drag him up some mountain. Thus left alone, he went to the window, looked out, listened, and perceiving some one pass, called out in a mourning and reproachful tone, "have so much charity for your poor curate, as to look up a horse for him, or a mule, or an ass. Is it possible that no one will assist me? Oh, what people! Stop for me at least, that I may come too, with you: stop, till some fifteen or twenty of you have got together, to conduct me, that I may not be abandoned. Will you leave me to be devoured by dogs? Don't you know that the greater part of them are Lutherans, and that they consider it a meritorious thing to kill a priest? Do you mean to leave me here to receive martyrdom? Oh, what people! Oh, what people!"

But to whom did he say these things? To men who were passing, bent under the weight of their poor movables, and with their thoughts occupied with what they had left behind exposed to be plundered; or to some one driving his heifer before him, with his children behind him, laden as much they could be, and the woman bearing in her arms the infants that were unable to walk. Some of them went on, without either answering or looking up, whilst others said, "master, you must make out as well as you can. You are fortunate in having no family to think for, help yourself, contrive some way or other."

"Oh, poor me!" exclaimed Don Abbondio, "oh, what people, what hearts! There is no charity, every one thinks of himself, no one thinks of me." And then he turned to look after Perpetua.

"Oh, precisely!" said she to him, "and the money?"

"What shall we do?"

"Give it to me, and I will bury it in the garden with the plates and knives and forks."

"But——"

"But, but, give it to me: keep a few sous if you should happen to want them, and let me manage with the rest."

Don Abbondio obeyed, he went to his strong chest, took his little treasure out, and consigned it to Perpetua, who said, "I will go and bury it in the garden, at the foot of the fig tree," and went away. A short time after she appeared with a basket containing provisions, and a small empty panier, in the bottom of which she hastily placed a little linen for herself and her master, saying, in the meantime, "the breviary, at least, your worship means to take yourself."

"But where are we going?"

"Why, where are all the rest going? First of all we'll go into the street, and there we shall hear and see what it is necessary to do."

Just at this moment Agnes came in, with a panier also on her shoulders, looking as though she had an important proposal to make.

Agnes also determined not to wait for guests of that kind, alone in the house as she was, and with some of the gold left which she had received from the Un-named, had been for some time hesitating where she should look for refuge. The remains of the gold crowns, which during the months of famine had been so serviceable to her, were the principal cause.

* In the middle ages, every lance that took the field had six or more armed followers; hence this term, from whence the French have got lansquenet.

of her fear and irresolution, having heard, that in the countries where the troops had passed, those who possessed money were reduced to a more terrible condition than any of the others, being exposed both to the violence of the invaders, and to the treachery of the country people. It is true that the good fortune which had thus, as it were, fallen into her lap, was a secret she had confided to no one, save Don Abbondio, to whom she would go every time it was necessary to change one of her crowns into small money, leaving with him always something to give in alms to any one poorer than herself. But concealed money, especially with those unaccustomed to have much to do with it, keeps the possessor in continued apprehension of the suspicions of others. At this time, whilst she was biding away, as well as she could, what she could not carry along with her, and was thinking of the crown she had sewed up in her stays, she remembered along with them, that the Un-named bad sent her the most unlimited offers of service, she recollected what she had heard say of his castle placed in so secure a situation, where, without the permission of its master, it was impossible for any thing but the birds to get, and she made up her mind to go there and seek an asylum. She reflected how she could make herself known to that nobleman, and Don Abbondio immediately came to her mind. Since his conversation with the archbishop, he had made particular demonstrations of benevolence to her, and the more cordially, since he was able to do it without committing himself with any body, for the young people being far off, it was very improbable that any requirement should be made of him, which should put his benevolence to a difficult trial. Supposing that, amidst so much trouble, the poor man must be more embarrassed and frightened than herself, and that the plan would appear excellent to him, she was come to propose it. Having found him with Perpetua, she laid the matter before them.

"What do you say, Perpetua?" asked Don Abbondio.

"I say that it is an inspiration from Heaven, and that we must lose no time, and set off directly."

"And afterwards—"

"And afterwards—afterwards; when we shall be there, we shall be satisfied. That nobleman, it is known, desires nothing better than to do good to his neighbor, and will be very well content to give us an asylum. There upon the borders, in the air, as it were, soldiers won't come certainly. And then we shall find something to eat too, for, up in the mountains, when this small grace of God is finished," and saying this, she placed it in the pannier upon the linen, "we shall be badly off enough."

"Converted, is he really converted, eh?"

"How? do you doubt of it yet, after all that we know, and all that we have seen?"

"And if we should be going just to put ourselves in a cage?"

"What cage? Why with all this nonsensical talking, excuse me, you will never come to a conclusion. Well done Agnes, this is a capital thought that has come into your head—" And placing the pannier upon a table, she put her arm through the straps, and slung it on her shoulder.

"Could'nt we," said Don Abbondio, "find some man who would go as an escort with his curate? If we should meet some bad fellow on the road, and there are too many of them about, what sort of help can you two women give me?"

"There you are going on again, just to lose time!" exclaimed Perpetua. "To go and look for a man at this time, when every one is busy about their own affairs. Come, go and get your breviary and your hat, and let us go."

Don Abbondio went, and soon returned with his breviary under his arm, his hat on his head, and his staff in his hand, and all three went out by a small door that led to the sacristy. Perpetua shut it, and not to omit any formality, rather than because she had much faith in the lock and the door, locked it, and put the key in her pocket. Don Abbondia gave a look at the church as he passed it, and said between his teeth, "it is the people's duty to look after it, as it is for their service. If they have any feeling for their church, they will think about it, and if they have not, so may it be with them."

They took their way by the fields, creeping silently along, each of them thinking about their own affairs, and loking round, especially Don Abbondio, to see if there was any suspicious person about, or any thing to distrust. But they met no one; the people were either at home taking care of their houses, making up their bundles, hiding things away, or on the road leading directly to the heights.

After letting many sighs and interjections escape at different times, Don Abbondio began to grumble in a more connected manner. He had a great deal to say against the duke of Nevers, who might have stayed in France and enjoyed himself, and lived like a prince, but must come and be the duke of Mantua in despite of the whole world. Then he quarreled with the emperor, who ought to have had sense enough to make allowances for the other's folly, he should have let water run downwards, and not be so full of punctilio, for at the end of the account, he would always have been emperor, whether Tizio or Sempronio was duke. Above all he had to say against the governor, whose duty it was to have done every thing, to have kept this scourge out of the country, and it was him who had brought it there, all for the love of making war." "They ought all of them to have been here," said he, "to see what that sort of love brings about. They have a fine account to render! In the meantime, those are suffering, who have nothing at all to do with it."

"Let these great people alone, since they are none of them coming here to help us,"

said Perpetua, "These," excuse me, "are some of your usual gossipings that come to no conclusions. That which most vexes me, rather—"

"Why what is the matter?"

Perpetua, who, during the walk, had been passing over quietly in her mind, the hiding of so many things in such haste, began to complain that she had forgotten such a thing, had not concealed another thing well, and had left some traces in another place, that might guide the thieves to them, and—

"Brava! said Don Abbondio, having by degrees comforted himself about his life, enough to afford to be a little miserable about his property, "brava! that is the way you have done things, eh? Where was your head all this time?"

"How!" exclaimed Perpetua, stopping for a moment, and putting her arms a kimbo, as much as the pannier permitted her to do, "How! you must make me these reproaches now, when it was you that made me lose my head, instead of helping me, and giving me courage! I have thought more about the things of the house perhaps, than of my own, and have had nobody to lend me a hand: I have had to be both Martha and Magdalen; if any thing goes wrong, I have nothing to do with it; I have done more than my duty."

Anges interrupted the dispute, and began to talk about her own misfortunes: she did not complain so much of her fatigue and of the injury she would receive, as she was grieved at seeing the hope vanish away, which she had entertained of soon embracing her Lucia, who, it will be remembered, she had agreed to meet precisely that autumn. It was not to be supposed that Donna Prasede would come to pass the season in the country under these circumstances, it was rather to be expected she had left the country, if she had been there, as all the other families had done.

The sight of the places they passed by, made these reflections still more acute in the mind of Agnes, and her inclination stronger to see her. Having left the field paths, they took the public road, the same by which the poor woman had come, so short a time ago, when she had reconducted her daughter home after spending the few days with her at the tailors. Already the village was in sight.

"We will go and ask those good people how they are," said Agnes. "And to rest a little, for I begin to get tired of this pannier, and should like to eat a mouthful," said Perpetua.

"Upon condition that we waste no time, for this is not a journey of pleasure by any means," said Don Abbondio.

They were received with open arms, and seen with great pleasure, for they called up the remembrance of a good action. Do good as often as you can, says our author here, and it will the more frequently happen to you to meet cheerful countenances.

Agnes, embracing the good woman, broke out into tears, which were a great relief to her, and answered with sobs to the questions which she and her husband put to her about Lucia.

"She is better off than we are," said Don Abbondio, "she is at Milan, out of danger, and far from all these troubles of the devil's own making."

"You are running away, eh, the Signor curate and his company? "said the tailor."

"To be sure," replied at once both master and servant.

"I pity you."

"We are on our road," said Don Abbondio, to the castle of—"

"You have decided wisely, you will be as safe there as in paradise."

"Are you not afraid here?" asked Don Abbondio.

"I will tell you, Signor curate. To get the rights of hospitality, as your worship knows we say in polite language, it is not their place to come here; we are too far out of their road, thanks be to Heaven. At the most, a few stragglers, which God will protect us from; but any how we have always time, we shall always get some news about them from the poor towns where their regular quarters will be established."

It was now determined to repose themselves a little there, and as it was dinner time, the tailor said, "You must honor my poor table, and no ceremony, you will find a dish of welcome there."

Perpetua said she had something with her to break their fasts, and after some mutual formalities, they agreed to put every thing together and to dine in company.

The children got round their old friend Agnes in great glee. The tailor immediately told one of the little girls, (she who carried the kindness that God sent through them to the widow Maria; who knows whether you remember it or not?) to go and strip the husks off a few early chestnuts, that were lying in a corner, and roast them.

"And you," said he to a boy, "go to the garden, and give the peach tree a shake just enough to bring three or four down, and bring them here, all of them, do you here me? And go you to the fig tree," said he to another, "and gather a few of them, you know how to do that better than you ought. He then went to tap a small barrel he had, and his wife to get a clean table cloth. Perpetua now took the provisions from her pannier, and the table was set A napkin and a plate of delf ware were put at the place of honor before Don Abbondio, with Don Abbondio's knife that Perpetua had in the pannier. They now sat down and dined; if not very merrily, at least with much more cheerfulness than any of the guests expected to feel on that day.

"Signor curate, what does your worship say of such a disperson as this?" said the tailor "It seems to me as if I was reading the stories about the Moors in France."

"What can I say? This must fall upon my shoulders too."

"But you have chosen a good asylum," he went on. "Who is there can get up to that place by force? You will find some company there too, we hear a great many have taken refuge there, and that they are still flocking there."

"I must hope," said Don Abbondio, "that we shall be well received. I know the worthy master of that castle, and when upon another occasion I had the honor of being with him, he was exceedingly kind."

"And to me," said Agnes, "he sent word by Monsignor illustrissimo, that when I should be in want of any thing, I had nothing to do but to go to him."

"A most wonderful conversion!" said Don Abbondio, "and he perseveres, is it not true? he perseveres."

The tailor now gave a long account of the holy life led by the Un-named, and how from being the scourge of the neighborhood, he had become the example and benefactor.

"And all those—people—that he had with him—his family—" said Don Abbondio, who had more than once heard something about them, but had never felt sufficiently assured.

"They are dispersed for the greater part," replied the tailor, "and those who remain, are quite changed, and in what a way! In fact the castle has become a perfect Thebaid; your worship knows what that means."

Then he began to recall with Agnes the visit of the cardinal. "A great man!" said he, "a great man! it is a pity that he went away in such a hurry, that I could'nt even pay him a little honor. How much I should like to talk to him again more at my ease!"

Having arisen from table, he pointed to a printed figure of the cardinal, which was hanging to one of the posts of the door, in veneration of the personage, and also as it gave him an opportunity of saying to every one who came to see him, that the figure did not resemble him, for he had been able to examine him nearly and at his leisure, when the cardinal was in that very room.

"Do they mean to say that this thing was made for him?" said Agnes, the dress to be sure does look like, but—"

"Is'nt it true that it is not like him?" said the tailor, "that is just what I always say, but if there is nothing else, there is his name under it, and it is a memorial."

Don Abbondio was getting impatient, and the tailor engaged to find a cart that should take them to the foot of the ascent: having gone out to procure it, he soon returned to say it was coming. "Signor curate," said he to Don Abbondio, "if your worship wishes to carry some book there to pass the time, I can serve you in a poor sort of way, for I amuse myself a little with reading too, common books however, not suited to your worship, still—"

"Thank you, thank you," replied Don Abbondio, "there are circumstances where one has scarcely head enough left to attend to what one's duty requires."

Whilst they were changing civilities, condolences and good auguries, invitations and promises to make a short stop on their return, the cart came to the door. The panniers were now put in it, they got in, and undertook, with a little more tranquillity of mind, the remaining portion of their journey.

The tailor had said the truth to Don Abbondio about the Un-named. From the day that we took leave of him, he had always continued to do what he had proposed to himself, to compensate injuries, seek for peace, succor the poor, and do good wherever it occurred to him. The courage he had at other times demonstrated in offending others and in defending himself, he now showed in abstaining from doing either one or the other. He was no longer armed, and went about always alone, ready to meet all the possible consequences of so much violence perpetrated, and convinced that it would be committing a new one, to use force in defence of a head, debtor in so much, and in so many things. He was persuaded that every injury done to himself, would be an offence to God, but in respect to himself a just retribution, and that he of all other men had the least claim to be the avenger of injuries done to himself. Notwithstanding this, he remained not less inviolable than when he kept so many persons armed for his own security, and was armed himself. The recollection of his ancient ferocity, and the contemplation of his present gentleness, the former, which would necessarily seem to have left so many desires of vengeance, the latter which softened them so much, conspired, instead, to create an admiration of him, that became his principal safeguard. He was the man whom no one had been able to humble, but who had humbled himself. The rancor, which had been formerly irritated by his scorn, and by the fear in which he was held, had now disappeared before this new humility which those he had offended were the witnesses of, beyond all expectation, and without any danger to themselves, a satisfaction they never could have promised themselves from the most successful revenge, the satisfaction of seeing a man lamenting for the wrongs he had done, and sharing, as it were, their own indignation.

More than one, whose bitterest and most intense vexation had been, for many years, to see no probability of ever being more powerful than himself, that they might be avenged, now, when they met him alone, unarmed, and with the deportment of one who would offer no resistance, felt no other inclination in themselves but to offer him demonstrations of honor. In this voluntary abasement, his presence and countenance had acquired, without his being aware of it, something that was lofty and noble, for there appeared in him more conspicuously than at any other time, the absence of all fear. The most obstinate and coarse hatreds were restrained too and kept in respect, by the public veneration for a penitent and beneficent man And so much was

this the case, that he was frequently embarrassed to avoid the demonstrations that were made to him, and was obliged to be careful that his internal feeling of compunction, and his abasement, should not be too strongly marked in his countenance and in his actions, that he might not be too much exalted. In the church he had selected for himself the lowest place, and well it was that no one ever attempted to occupy it, it would have been like usurping a post of honor from him. To offend such a man, or even treat him irreverently, seemed to be not only a base thing or a crime, but a piece of sacrilege; and they themselves, to whom this feeling on the part of others served as a restraint, even partook of it more or less.

These and other causes averted from him also the more distant animadversion of the public authority, and procured him, even from this quarter, a security about which he gave himself no trouble. His rank and connexions, which had in all times been of advantage to him, were now still more so, since to his name, already illustrious and notorious, was added personal recommendations, and the glory of his conversion. The magistrates and the chief men had publicly rejoiced at this, as well as the people; and it would have appeared strange to have persecuted a man who was the subject of so many congratulations. Besides a magistracy occupied in a perpetual contest, and too often an unfortunate one, with existing rebellions, and others springing up, might be well satisfied with being freed from the most indomptable and troublesome of them all, and need not go to look out for more; especially since that conversion produced reparations which the authorities were not accustomed to obtain, nor in the habit of requiring. To torment a saint, did not appear a proper method of getting rid of the shame of not having been able to subdue a sinner, and such an attempt upon him, could have produced no other effect than of deterring men like him from becoming inoffensive. Probably, too, the part which cardinal Federigo had had in his conversion, and the association of his name with that of the converted man, had served him as a blessed shield. And in that state of things and ideas, in that singular relation of the spiritual authority and the civil power, which had such frequent struggles without ever thinking of destroying each other, nay, mingling always with their hostilities, acts of kindness, and protestations of deference, and which, very frequently persevered together to a mutual end without ever making peace; it might seem, in a certain manner, that the reconciliation of the first, carried with it the oblivion, if not the absolution, of the second, when it alone had operated to produce an end desired by both.

Thus the man upon whom, if he had fallen, great and small would have rushed to smite, having voluntarily laid down, was spared by all, and reverenced by many.

It is true there were still many, to whom that wonderful change gave any thing but satisfaction; so many pensioned perpetrators of crime, so many other companions in it, who now lost a powerful auxiliary on whom they had been accustomed to rely, and who now found the thread of many plots broken, which had been laid long ago, at the very moment they were expecting news of their success. But we have already seen what various feelings this conversion had produced in the bandits that lived with their master, when they heard it announced from his own mouth; astonishment, grief, consternation, vexation, a little of every thing save contempt or hatred. The same occurred with those whom he kept dispersed in different places, and those who were his accomplices in greater affairs, as soon as they heard the terrible news, and all from the same causes. The hatred they felt, as we find from Ripamonti, fell rather upon cardinal Federigo. They looked upon him as a man who had interfered in their affairs—as an enemy; as to the Un-named he had merely wanted to save his soul, and no one had any right to complain of him.

One after another, the greater part of the domestic Bravos, not being able to accommodate themselves to the new discipline, and seeing no probability of a change being effected, had left the castle; some seeking another master, perhaps amongst the old friends of him they had left; some enlisting among the Spanish or Mantovan soldiers, or some other belligerent party; some perhaps had taken to the road, to make war on a smaller scale, and on their own account, whilst others were satisfied to carry on their thieving independent of control; and in like manner those who were under his orders in various places made their arrangments. Of those who had been able to reconcile themselves to this new kind of life, or who had embraced it cordially, the greater part natives of the valley, had returned to the cultivation of the fields, or to the trades which they had learnt before they became bandits. The foreigners remained in the castle as domestic servants, returning to the blessings of civilization along with their master, and passing their time as he did, without doing or receiving injuries, unarmed and respected.

But when on the invasion of the German troops, some of those who were flying before them, came to the castle to seek an asylum, he delighted that his walls should be sought as a refuge by the oppressed, which they had so long looked upon from afar with dread, received the wanderers, with expressions of gratitude rather than courtesy, and caused it to be known, that his mansion would be open to whoever chose to fly there, and immediately set about not only putting it, but the whole valley in a state of defence, lest any landsknechts or cappelletti should come after them to hurt them. He collected the servants who had remained with him, few but excellent, like the verses of Torti, and addressed them upon

the good opportunity which God had given to them and him, to employ themselves in the service of their neighbors, whom they had so often oppressed and alarmed, and with that ancient tone of command, that expressed the certainty of obedience, announced to them generally what he wished them to do, and above all things prescribed to them to restrain themselves, that the people who came there to seek refuge, might see in them only friends and defenders. He then caused fire arms, swords, and spears, to be brought down from a room near the roof, which for some time had been heaped up there, and distributed them amongst them: his country people and tenants of the valley, who desired it, were told to come with their arms to the castle, and those who had none, were furnished by him. Some were selected as officers, and had others placed under them again; posts were assigned to them, at the entrance and at various parts of the valley, upon the mountain side, and at the gates of the castle: he arranged the times and manner of relieving them as in camps, and as the usage had been there before, when he led so desperate a life.

In a corner of the room near the roof, there were, separated from the heap, the arms which he alone had worn, his famous carbine, muskets, swords, broadswords, pistols, knives, daggers, laid on the floor, or hung on the walls. The servants touched none of them, but agreed to ask their master which of them they should bring him, "none of them," replied he, and whether he made a vow, or because it was his intention, he always went without arms, at the head of such a garrison as we have described.

At the same time, he had set to work other men and women of the family and who depended upon him, to prepare lodgings in the castle for as many persons as it was possible, to set up beds, matresses, and bags of straw, in all the rooms and halls, which were turned into dormitories. He had given orders for an abundant supply of provisions, to feed the guests whom God should send him, and who in fact kept constantly augmenting. He was never still a moment, in and out of the castle, up and down the hill, and around the valley, to establish, strengthen, and visit the posts, to see, and to let himself be seen, to put and to keep every thing in order with his words, his eyes, and his presence. At home, on the road, he received all comers that he met; and all, who had seen him before, or who saw him for the first time, looked at him with ecstacy, forgetting for a moment the woes and the fears that had driven them there, and turned again to look at him, as soon as he, having parted with them, pursued his way.

CHAPTER XXX.

Although the greatest concourse was not in the direction that our three fugitives had taken towards the valley, but at its opposite end, still at this last stage, they began to fall in with companions in their journey and in misfortune, who from cross roads and paths were getting into the high road. In circumstances like these, people who meet each other form an acquaintance. Each time that the cart came up with a person on foot, mutual inquiries and answers were exchanged. Some, like our travelers, had run away without waiting the arrival of the soldiers, some had waited until they had heard the drums and trumpets; some had heard the soldiers themselves, and gave a description of them such as terrified people usually do.

"We are very unfortunate," said the two women, "we thank God; let the things go; at least we have got ourselves out of the way."

But Don Abbondia did not find so much cause for congratulation; nay, the concourse of people, and the still greater one which he heard approaching from the other side, began to annoy him!

"Oh," what a business is this he murmured to the women, at a moment when there was no one near, "Oh, what a business!" dont you comprehend, that to collect so many people in one place, is just the same thing as to bring the soldiers there by force? All are hiding, all are carrying away, there is nothing left in the houses, they will think there are treasures up in the castle. They are sure to come there. Oh, poor me! What an affair have I embarked in!" "Go up to the castle?" said Perpetua, "they will have to follow the road they have taken: besides I have always heard, that in danger, it is always better to be many."

"Many, be many!" replied Don Abbondio, "silly woman! Don't you know that every landsknecht would eat a hundred such? And then, if they were to commit any extravagances, it would be a pretty piece of business, eh? to be in the midst of a battle. Oh, poor me! it would have been better to have gone to the mountains. What do they all want to go to one place for? Stupid creatures!" and then he grumbled in a lower tone, "every body is here, see, see, see; one behind the other like animals without any sense."

"At that rate," said Agnes, "even they might say the same thing of us."

"Hold your tongue," said Don Abbondio, "all this prating serves no purpose at all. What is done, is done; here we are, and here we must stay! It must be as Providence pleases; God send we may have good luck."

But it was much worse, when at the entrance of the valley, he perceived a post of armed men, some of them at the door of a house, and part of them in their quarters in the lower rooms. He took a peep at them, and perceived they were not the same faces he had seen, at his former unhappy trip to the valley, or if they were the same, they were very much changed, nevertheless it is difficult to describe what trouble the sight of them gave him. Oh, poor me! thought he,—see what foolish doings

are going on. Indeed, how could it be otherwise; I ought to have expected such things from such a man as he is. But what does he want to do? Does he want to make war?—Does he want to be king, eh? Oh, poor me! Just at a time when one would be glad to be buried under ground, he is contriving all sorts of ways for people to see him, just to invite them to come here!"

"See now, master," said Perpetua to him, "see what brave people there are, that will be able to defend us. Let the soldiers come. The folks here are not like our clowns, who can only just move their limbs."

"Hold your tongue," answered Don Abbondio, in an angry and low tone of voice, "be silent. You don't know what you are talking about. Pray to Heaven that the soldiers may'nt stop any where to hear what is going on here, and that they are putting things in order just as if it was a fortress. Don't you know that the business of a soldier is to take fortresses? That's all they want; for them to go to an assault, is like another person going to a wedding, for all that they find there they make free with, and they put every body to the sword. Oh, poor me! Well, I'll see if there is no way of making myself safe by getting on the top of one of them peaks. They shall not catch me in one of their battles: oh, they shall not catch me in one of their battles." "Are you afraid too of being defended and assisted?" Perpetua continued; but Don Abbondio interrupted her sharply, yet always in a low voice, "hold your tongue, and mind you don't mention what we have been saying! Remember that here you must always put on a cheerful face, and appear to approve of every thing that is going on."

At Malanotte they found another post of armed men, whom Don Abbondio very humbly saluted with his hat, saying in his heart,—alas, alas, here I have got into the midst of a camp! Here the cart stopped, and they got out. Don Abbondio paid the man who drove them and dismissed him, and began the ascent without uttering a word. The sight of those places kept awakening in his mind, and mingling with his present distress, the remembrance of that he had suffered when he was here before. And Agnes, who had never been here, and who had formed to herself a fantastic picture of the place, every time she thought of the things that had taken place here, beholding it now in reality, experienced a new and more lively feeling of those painful recollections.—"Oh, signor curate!" she exclaimed, "to think only that my poor Lucia has passed over this ground!" Will you hold your tongue? Woman without discretion!" he cried into her ear, "are these things to speak of here in the camp? Don't you know that we are here in his house? It is lucky that no one hears us, but if you talk at this rate"—

"Oh!" said Agnes, "but he is a saint."

"Hold your tongue, I say, "replied he," do you believe that saints are to be told, without restraint, every thing that comes into one's head? Think rather of thanking him for the good he has done to you."

"Oh, as to that, I had thought about it already. Does your reverence think I have got no breeding at all?"

"Good breeding consists in not saying things that are disagreeable, especially to those that are not accustomed to hear them. And understand well, both of you, that this is no place to play the vixen, and to be saying every thing that comes into your head. It is the house of a great nobleman, you know that. See what sort of a family he has got about him, people of all kinds here; so use a little judgment, if you have got any: weigh your words, and above all, make use of very few, and only when there is a necessity for them, for silence makes no mistakes."

"Your worship does a great deal worse with all these"—Perpetua was beginning to say, but, "hush!" said Don Abbondio, into her ear, and taking his hat off at the same instant, made a profound bow, for looking up he had perceived the Un-named coming down to meet them. He also had perceived Don Abbondio, and recognized him, and made haste to join him.

"Signor curate," he said, when he drew near, "I should have wished to have offered you my house upon a more happy occasion, but in every way I am glad to be able to serve you in something."

"I confide in the great goodness of Vossignoria illustrissima," answered Don Abbondio, "I have been so bold in these sad circumstances as to trouble you, and as Vossignoria illustrissima sees, I have taken the liberty too of bringing company with me. This is my housekeeper."

"She is very welcome," said the Un-named.

"And this," continued Don Abbondio, is a female, to whom Vossignoria has already been kind, she is the mother of that—of that—of Lucia," said Agnes.

"Of Lucia," exclaimed the Un-named, turn- to Agnes, with his face to the ground. "I, kind! Immortal God! you are kind in coming here, to me, to this house. You are welcome. You bring a blessing to us."

"Oh, indeed!" said Agnes, "I am come to trouble you, and" she went on drawing nigh to his ear, "I have to thank you besides for—"

The Un-named interrupted her, and anxiously inquired after Lucia, he then turned to accompany his new guests to the castle, in spite of the ceremonious resistance which they made. Agnes gave the curate a look which seemed to say—you can see now how little occasion there is for you to interfere with your opinions between us two.

"Are they arrived at your parish?" asked the Un-named.

"No, signor, I would not wait for such devils," answered he. "Heaven knows, whether I should have got alive out of their hands, and been able to come here to trouble Vossignoria illustrissima."

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"Well, well, be of good heart," said the Un-named, "you are now in security. They will not come up here, and if they should try it, we are ready to receive them."

"I hope they will not come," said Don Abbondio, "I hear," he added, pointing to the mountains that closed the valley on the other side, "I hear, that on that side too there is another troop coming, but—but—"

"It is true," answered the Un-named, but be under no apprehension, we are ready for them both."

Between two fires—said Don Abbondio to himself,—precisely between two fires. Where have I let them bring me? and by a couple of chattering silly women too. And he seems to be quite glad that we have got into this trouble. Oh, what people there are in this world!

Having entered the castle, Agnes and Perpetua were conducted to a room in that part of it assigned to females, which occupied three of the four sides of the second court, in the back part of the building, upon a jutting and isolated mass, overhanging a precipice. The men were lodged in the sides of the other court, to the right and to the left, and in the side that fronted the esplanade. The central part of the building, which separated the two courts, and through which there was a communication from one to the other, by a broad passage opposite to the principal gate, was in part occupied by provisions, and partly served as a place of deposite for the things which the refugees had brought with them. In the mens' quarter there was a small apartment destined to the ecclesiastics who might come. There the Un-named accompanied Don Abbondio, who was the first to take possession of it.

Twenty-three or twenty-four days our wanderers remained in the castle, amidst a continual movement, and a great company, which at first kept continually increasing, but without any adventures of importance. Not a day, to be sure, passed, that the men were not called to arms. Landsknechts were seen here, and cappelletti were seen there. At every news, the Un-named sent men to explore; and if it appeared an urgent case, took some of his people along with him, whom he always held in readiness, and went with them out of the valley, to the part where danger was apprehended. And it was a most singular spectacle, to see a troop of men armed to the throat, and in military order, led by a chief himself unarmed. In general, the enemy they went to seek were foragers, or disbanded plunderers, that fled before they came up with them. But upon one occasion, driving some of these to teach them not to approach in that quarter, the Un-named received information that a small neighboring town had been invaded and delivered to plunder. The men who had done this, were landsknechts of various corps, who had remained behind to forage, and who having formed into a squadron, tried to surprise the towns contiguous to where the army was quartered, to plunder the inhabitants, and lay them under contribution. The Un-named made a short speech to his men, and led them on in the direction of the small town they had invaded.

They arrived there quite unexpectedly; the enemy believing they had nothing to do but plunder, seeing themselves attacked by armed men, ready for fight, left their business half done, and without waiting for one another, fled to the place they had come from. He pursued them for a short distance, then having halted, he waited a while to see if any thing should occur, and returned. On his passage through the place he had saved, shouts of applause and benedictions were poured out on the friendly troop that had preserved them, and on their leader.

In the castle, in such a chance multitude, various in condition, in manners, in sex, and age, no disorder of any consequence ever took place. The Un-named had placed guards in every quarter, who endeavored to remove every inconvenience, with the zeal that each one carried into the business that was intrusted to him.

He had requested the ecclesiastics, and those who had most authority amongst the refugees, to give a vigilant eye to what was going on. And as often as he could, he was going about to show himself: but, even in his absence, the recollection of whose house they were in, served to restrain those who might have been disposed to give trouble: besides, all were people who had run away, and for that reason, generally inclined to be quiet; the thoughts of home and of their property, of the relations and friends they had left in danger, and the news they received, all tended to depress their spirits, and kept up and increased that disposition the more. There were also some heads free from care, men of a more staid disposition, and of a more lively courage, who endeavored to pass their time cheerfully. They had abandoned their homes because they were not strong enough to defend them; but they took no pleasure in weeping and sighing after what could

not be remedied, and avoided dwelling in imagination upon the destruction, which unfortunately, they would be visible witnesses of some day. Families already acquainted had fled in company, or had met at the castle; new friendsbips were formed, and the crowd had divided itself into groups, according to their customs and inclination.

Those who had money and discretion, went down into the valley, where, for the occasion, public houses and taverns had been hastily established; there, in some of them, lamentations alternated with their mouthfuls, and nothing but their distresses was permitted to be talked of; in others, sorrow was never spoken of, but only to say it was not to be talked about.—Those who could not, or would not, go to any expense, bad bread, soup, and wine, distributed to them at the castle; there were besides, some tables daily served, for tbose whom the master had expressly invited, and amongst those were our acquaintances.

Agnes and Perpetua, that they might earn their food, had requested to be employed in the service that was required for such an extensive asylum, and in this they passed a great part of the day, and the remaining part of it in talking with some female friends they had made, or with poor Don Abbondio. He had nothing at all to do, but still was not annoyed on that account, fear kept bim company. The apprehensions of an assault, I believe had passed away from bim, or if be had any of them, they did not give him the most trouble, for every time he turned bis tboughts for an instant that way, he must have perceived how little foundation there was for them. But the idea of the neigbboring country, inundated on every side with ferocious soldiers, the arms and the armed men he had constantly before him, a castle, that particular castle, the thougbt of the many things that might take place at every moment in such a situation, kept him in an indistinct, general, and continual dread, leaving aside the inquietude that the thoughts of his poor house gave him. During the whole time he remained in this asylum, be never left it a stone's throw, nor ever set his foot on the descent: his only walk was to go out on the esplanade, and wander from one side to the other of the castle, looking down amongst the ravines and bushes, to examine whether there was a pass in the least degree practicable, or any patb, by which he might go to look for a hiding place in case of an attack. To all his fellow companions in the place he made profound reverences, but avoided being familiar with them; his most frequent conversations were witb the two women, as we have said; with them he gave vent to his vexations, at the risk of a quarrel with Perpetua, or being shamed even by Agnes. At table too, where he staid a very sbort time, and spoke very little, he heard the news of the terrible passage, wbich arrived every day, traveling on from town to town, and from mouth to mouth, or brought to the castle by some one, who at first had thought of remaining at bome, and at last was obliged to fly without being able to save any thing, and perhaps ill-treated. Every day there was some new story of distress; some who were professional newsmongers carefully collected all the reports, sifted all the accounts, and gave the essence of them to others; others disputed which regiments were the most ferocious, whether the infantry or the cavalry were worse; they repeated as well as they could the names of the condottieri; the past undertakings of some of them were related, their stations and marches were specified: such a day a particular regiment was in sucb and such places, tomorrow it would visit others, whilst in the meantime it was playing the devil and worse in such another. Above all, information was sought for, and an account kept of the regiments that by turns passed the bridge of Lecco, because those might be considered as gone, and completely out of the district. There was the cavalry of Wallenstein, the infantry of Marradas, the horse of Anlzalt, the Brandensburgh foot, the cavalry of Montecuccoli, and that of Ferrari. Altringer had passed, then Furstenberg, then Colloredo, then the Croats, then Torquato Conti, then others and others, and at last it pleased beaven that Galasso also sbould pass, who was the last.

The flying squadron of Venetians at last also drew off, and the wbole country, to tbe right and to the left, was perfectly free. The people from the places which had been first entered and left, had begun to leave the castle; every day some were going away, as after an autumnal storm, the birds are seen in every direction issuing from the leafy branches of a large tree where they had taken sbelter. Our three acquaintances were the last to go away, and that on account of Don Abbondio, wbo feared, if he returned home directly, to find some stray landsknechts about at the tail of the army. Perpetua might talk as she pleased, and tell him the longer he delayed, the more opportunities he gave to the rogues of the place to enter the house, and take what was left, whenever his own skin was in question, he was sure to conquer her, unless indeed the imminence of the danger made him incapable of resistance.

The day fixed upon for the departure, the Un-named had a carriage brought to Malanotte, in which he had ordered an assortment of linen to be put for Agnes. Taking her on one side, he made her also accept a small purse of crowns, to repair the destruction sbe would find in her house, although putting her hand on her bust, sbe assured him she had some of tbe old ones left yet.

"When you shall see your poor good Lucia," he said to her at the last, "I am sure she will pray for me; since I have done ber so much evil, tell her that I thank her, and that I trust in God that her prayers will bring down also benedictions upon herself."

He insisted on accompanying all three of his guests to tbe carriage; the humble and obsequious thanks of Don Abbondio, and the compli-

mentary things said by Perpetua, may be imagined. They drove off, and made, as had been agreed upon, a short stop at the tailor's house, where a thousand things were told them about the passage of the troops, the old story of plundering, of assaults, of ruin, and of filth; but by good fortune no landsknechts had been there.

"Ah, signor curate," said the tailor, giving him his arm to get into the carriage "there will have to be some printed books, about such a terrible affair as this has been."

As soon as they had made a little progress, our travelers began to perceive with their own eyes a little of what they had so often heard described. Vineyards destroyed and stripped, not as after the vintage, but as if hail and hurricane had been in company among them; the branches lying on the ground, torn and trampled under foot, the stakes pulled up, the soil trodden down and covered with stones, leaves, and shoots: the trees were lopped and split, the hedges were full of gaps, and the dividing fences all carried away. In the towns, the doors were broke, the paper windows all torn, and straw, rags, fragments, in heaps, or scattered in the streets: the air was heavy, and bad smells came out of the houses. The country people were either cleansing their houses from the filth, repairing them as well as they could, or in knots weeping and lamenting together; and as the carriage passed, hands were stretched out to the doors to ask for alms.

With this spectacle, now before their eyes, now in their imaginations, expecting to find the same state of things at home; they at last arrived, and found things precisely as they expected.

Agnes placed her bundles in a corner of the court-yard, which had remained the cleanest part of the premises: she then began to put things in order, and to collect the small affairs that had been left undestroyed; she got a carpenter and a smith to repair her doors; and opening the present of linen she had received, and secretly counting the new crowns which had been given to her, she exclaimed to herself —I have lighted on my feet, God and the madonna be thanked, and that good gentleman— I may truly say I have fallen on my feet!

Don Abbondio and Perpetua got into their house, without the aid of keys; at every step they advanced in the passage, they felt a mouldy, diseased, pestilential air, that drove them back; with their hands to their noses, they reached the kitchen door, and entered a-tiptoe, carefully minding where they trod to avoid the most disgusting and filthy parts of the litter that was on the floor, and giving a look all round. Nothing was left entire, but pieces and fragments of what had been so, were seen both here and every where, in every corner: feathers and quills of Perpetua's fowls, strips of linen, leaves from the calendars of Don Abbondio, pieces of earthenware, altogether, or scattered about. Upon the hearth only could be traced the signs of a complete pillage, all closely brought into a place together, like a great many ideas not expressed but understood in the speech of an eloquent man. Ends of brands, and burnt pieces of wood, that conveyed the idea of the elbow of an arm chair, the foot of a table, the door of a closet, the post of a beadstead, the stave of the cask which once contained the wine that fortified the stomach Don Abbondio. The rest was all ashes and charcoal, and with this very charcoal, the spoilers, by way of compensation, had begrimed the walls over with queer figures, ingeniously contriving with certain square caps and tonsures, and broad faces, to imitate priests, taking great pains to make them as horrible and ridiculous as possible, an intention, that truly such artists could not fail in.

"Hogs!" exclaimed Perpetua. "Rascals!" exclaimed Don Abbondio; and as if they were escaping, they ran out by another door that opened into the garden. Here they drew breath, and went to the fig tree, but ere they reached it, they perceived the earth had been removed, and both of them screamed out together: when they got there, they found that the corpse which had been buried there, had been taken away. Here a little scandal took place. Don Abbondio reproached Perpetua with having awkwardly hid the things, and as may be supposed, she returned it with interest: as soon as they had both of them made a pretty good noise, they returned to the house grumbling, with their arms stretched out, and their fingers pointed to the hole. All over the house they found nearly the same state of things. They had some difficulty in getting the house cleansed and disinfested, it being not very practicable at such a time to get any assistance, and they had to live some time, almost as if they were in camp, accommodating themselves as well as they could, until they got the doors, the movables, and the utensils replaced, with money that was borrowed of Agnes.

This disaster proved to be in the end, the germ of some very troublesome disputes; for Perpetua, by force of asking questions, of peeping and putting her nose every where, found out that some goods, belonging to her master, which were supposed to have been carried away or destroyed by the soldiers, were instead of that, in very good order, in the possession of some people of the place, and she kept plaguing her master to assert his rights, and get his property again. This was a disagreeable chord to strike on with Don Abbondio, for his property was in the possession of rogues, a class of persons he had been always very solicitous to be at peace with.

"But I don't want to know any thing about them!" said he. "How often have I not told you, that what is gone, is gone? Am I to be tormented now because other people have robbed my house?"

"That's just what I say! You would let them tear one's eyes out of one's head. It's a sin to steal from other people, but it's no sin to rob you."

"Only see how stupidly you can talk!" re-

plied Don Abbondio. "Will you hold your tongue, then?"

Perpetua stopped, but not immediately, and this was only for a pretext to break out again; so that at last the poor man was reduced to the point of not daring to utter a single regret because this or the other thing was not there, when he stood in need of it, as she immediately broke out with, "go and look for it at such a ones who has got it, and would not have kept it until this time if he had not known it belonged to a good natured man."

Another, and more lively uneasiness sprung from his bearing of straggling soldiers passing every day, as he had too well conjectured, which kept him in constant apprehension of some of them, or even a troop coming to his house: he had had the door repaired the first thing, and kept it secured with great care, but it pleased heaven to spare him that distress. These terrors, however, had scarcely ceased, when a new one broke out.

But we leave the poor curate aside now, as we have to speak of something else besides private apprehensions, or the distress of particular towns, or of a temporary disaster.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The plague, which the tribunal of health had feared might enter with the German troops into the Milanese territory, had really been brought there, as is known; and it is equally known that it did not stop there, but invaded and undid a great part of Italy. Led by the thread of our story, we come now to recount the principal events of that calamity, in the Milanese we wish to be understood, and indeed in Milan exclusively: for it is of the city alone all the memorials of the time speak, as it usually happens every where, for good and bad reasons. And in this relation, our intent is not, to speak the truth, to describe the state of things where our principal personages were, but to make our readers acquainted, as far as we can in a brief space, and indeed as well as we can, a portion of our country's history more famous than known.

Of the numerous contemporaneous accounts, there is not one which of itself suffices to give a condensed and well arranged idea, as there is not one, which is not useful in acquiring one. In each, without excepting that of Ripamonti,* who is far before them all in the abundance and choice of his facts, and still more so in his mode of considering them; in each, essential facts are omitted which are recorded in others, in each there are material errors which may be perceived and rectified by the aid of another, or those few acts of public authority, edited or inedited, which have been preserved. Frequently in one we find those causes, of which in another we have seen, in an isolated state, the effects. In all of them, there prevails a strange confusion of times and things, and a perpetual going backwards and forwards, at random, without any general design, or regular plan even in particulars. A character, as to the rest, very generally belonging to the books of that period, those principally written in our language, at least those which were written in Italy, which we doubt whether the learned in other parts of Europe are aware of. No writer of a later period has proposed to examine and compare those accounts, to draw a connected chain of events from them, as history of that plague; so that the notion generally entertained of it is necessarily uncertain and rather confused: an indeterminate idea of great evils and great errors, (and in truth both one and the other existed to a degree far beyond what can be imagined,) an idea formed more from opinion than from facts, a few scattered facts, unaccompanied by their most characteristic circumstances, and without distinction of time, that is without any relation to cause and effect, its course and progress. As to ourselves, we have examined and compared, with great diligence at least, all the printed accounts, more than one inedited one, many (in respect to the few which remain) documents which are called official: we have endeavored to give such a relation of this pest, not the most perfect that could be produced, but such a one as has never been given yet.

We do not mean to refer to all the public acts, nor to all the incidents deserving of being preserved, much less do we pretend to render the reading of the old accounts useless to those who desire to have a more complete detail; we are too sensible what a lively, powerful, and almost incommunicable character there is in works of that kind, however conceived and constructed. We have only endeavored to distinguish and ascertain the most remarkable facts, to arrange them in their proper order of succession, as far as their nature is susceptible of it, to observe their mutual efficiency, and thus to give for the present, and until others furnish something better, a succinct, but true and continuous relation of that disaster.

Along the whole line of country through which the army passed, a few dead bodies had been found in the houses, and on the road.—Very soon after, individuals and whole families began to sicken and to die, in various parts of the country, of violent and extraordinary complaints, the symptoms of which were unknown to the greater part of the living. There were only a few persons who had seen them before, those who were old enough to remember the plague which, fifty three years before, had desolated a great part of Italy, and especially the Milanese, where it was called, and still is, the plague of San Carlo. So great is the power of charity! In the various and very

* Josephi Ripamontii, canonici Scalensis, chronistæ urbis Mediolani, De peste quæ fuit anno 1630, Libri v. Mediolani, 1640, apud Malatestas.

solemn memorials we have of such an universal misfortune, it has been able to bring out in full relief, the great benevolence of one man; inspiring him with feelings and actions more memoral than the misfortune itself, and stamping him in his men's minds as the symbol of all these sad events; in the whole of which it urged him forwards to resist the evil; himself the guide, the succor, the example, and at length the voluntary victim; a power, that could make what was a common calamity, appear to be an enterprise peculiarly his own, and which could honor it with his name, as if it was a conquest or a discovery.

The head physician, Ludovico Settala, who had not only witnessed that plague, but who had been one of the most active and intrepid; and, although very young, one of the most celebrated practitioners, and who now having strong suspicions about this, was upon the alert collecting information, communicated to the tribunal of health, on the 20th October, that in the town of Chuiso, the last of the territory of Lecco, on the Bergamasc frontier, the contagion had undoubtedly broke out: no steps however were taken in consequence, at is stated by Tadino, page 24.

Similar accounts were now received from Lecco and Bellano. The tribunal then came to a determination, but contented itself with despatching a commissary, who was to take up a physician at Como, on the road, and accompanied by him, should visit the places that had been mentioned. Both of them "either from ignorance, or for some other reason, suffered themselves to be persuaded by an old ignorant barber at Bellano, that that kind of disorder was not the plague," but in some places was the usual effect produced by the continual exhalations from the marshes; and every where else, was the consequence of the hardships and discomforts suffered during the passage of the Germans. This assurance was carried to the tribunal, which appears to have been tranquilized by it.

But news continually arriving of increasing mortality in different parts of the country, two delegates were despatched to investigate and examine themselves; the aforesaid Tadino, and an auditor of the tribunal. When they got into the country, the proofs were so numerous that it was not necessary to use any diligence in looking for them. They traversed the territory of Lecco, of Valsassina, the banks of the lake of Como, the districts called Mount Brianza and the Gera of Adda, and every where found barriers about the towns, some almost deserted, the inhabitants having abandoned them, and having encamped in the country, or being dispersed.

"They seemed to us," says Tadino, "like so many wild creatures, carrying mint, and rue, and rosemary in their hands, and some of them cruets of vinegar. They made inquiries of the number of those who had died, and it was dreadful. They examined both the sick and the dead, and saw the lurid and terrible marks of the pestilence every where. As soon as possible, they communicated by letter the fatal news to the tribunal of health, which on their reception, as Tadino says, "set about" regulating passports, and closing the gates of the city against all persons coming from infected districts "and whilst the proclamation was preparing," some summary orders were given by anticipation to the revenue officers at the gates.

In the meantime, the delegates with as much despatch as they could, made such precautionary arrangements as they were able to do for the best, and returned with the sad feeling that they were altogether insufficient to remedy or arrest an evil which had spread itself so much, and had advanced so rapidly.

On the 14th November, both a verbal and written report being delivered to the tribunal, they were commissioned to present themselves to the governor, and disclose the real state of things to him. They presented themselves to him, and reported, that he had appeared very much troubled on receiving the information; and that he had evinced a good deal of feeling, but that the affairs of the war were more pressing, *sed belli graviores esse curas.** This is what Ripamonti says, who had examined the registers of the tribunal, and had conferred with Tadino, who was especially charged with the mission. It was the second, if the reader remembers, on the same errand. Two or three days afterwards, on the 18th November, the governor issued a decree, in which he ordered public demonstrations for the birth of Prince Charles, the first born of King Philip IV, without suspecting or even caring about the danger of bringing a concourse of people together under such circumstances, as if it had been in ordinary times, and pestilence had not even been spoken of.

The governor, as we have before said, was the celebrated Ambrogio Spinola, expressly sent to re-establish the war, to remedy the blunders of Don Gonzalo, and incidentally, as it were, to govern the people. We can also incidentally mention, that he died a few months afterwards, in the same war he had so much at heart, and died, not of wounds received in the field, but in his bed, of sorrow and rankling at the heart, on account of the reproaches, the vexations, and disgusts of every kind, that he had received from those he served. History has deplored his fate, and has marked the ingratitude observed towards him; it has described with great care his military and political conduct, praised his foresight, his activity, and constancy. History might have inquired where those qualities were, when the plague was menacing and invading a population, confided to his care and vigilance.

But what, leaving the blame entire, diminishes our surprise at his conduct, what creates greater and more lively astonishment, is the behavior of the population itself, of that part

* Ripamonti, p. 215.

of it I mean to say, which not yet seized by the contagion, had such just cause to dread it On the arrival of these news from the towns thus desolated, and which form a circle about the city, in some points not more distant from it than twenty miles, and others eighteen, who would not have thought that a general commotion would have broke out, and an impatient solicitude for some regulations, good or bad, to be established, or at least a silent inquietude. Yet, if in any one thing the memoirs of the time agree, it is in the fact, that nothing of the kind took place. The penury of the preceding year, the distresses created by the soldiers, the afflictions of mind, seemed more than sufficient to account for the mortality. At the pot-houses, in the shops, in the houses, whoever uttered a word about the danger, whoever hinted at the plague, was met by incredulous mockery, or with contemptuous anger. The same incredulity, the same, to give it a more just name, blindness and obstinacy prevailed in the senate, in the council of decurions and in every magistrature.

I find that Cardinal Federigo, as soon as the first cases of contagion became known, enjoined the clergy by pastoral letters, amongst other things, to inculcate to the people the importance and obligation of making known every case that should occur, and to put away all infected and suspicious things.* This also may be enumerated amongst his singular and praiseworthy actions.

The tribunal of health solicited help, and the establishment of precautions, but it was almost in vain. And in the tribunal itself, they were far from meeting the urgency of the case. It was, as Tadino frequently asserts, and as it appears most clearly from the whole of his narrative, the two physicians, who persuaded fully of the imminence and importance of the danger, urged that body, which had afterwards to stimulate all the others.

We have seen, on the first news of the plague how tardily they went to work, even in procuring information: here we have another fact connected with their slow movements, not less extraordinary, if it was not produced by obstacles originating with the superior magistrates. The proclamation concerning passports, which was considered the 30th October, was not determined upon until the 23d of the following month, and was not published until the 29th. The plague was already in Milan,

Tadino and Ripamonti were desirous of recording the names of the persons who carried it there first, and other details concerning them; and in fact, when we turn our attention to the beginning of such a vast mortality, in which the victims, to say nothing of distinguishing them by name, can scarce be approximatively designated by the number of thousands who die, we experience a particular interest to be acquainted with those first and few names, which might have been noted and preserved; that sort of distinction, which a precedence in extermination gives, seems to be found in them, and in the particulars connected with them, even when they are trifling, something singularly fatal and memorable.

Each of these historians says, that it was an Italian soldier in the Spanish service, upon more than this they do not agree, not even upon his name. According to Tadino, it was one Pietro Antonio Lovato who had been quartered in the territory of Lecco; and according to Ripamonti, one Pier Paolo Locati, who had been quartered at Chiavenna. They differ also as to the day that he entered Milan, Tadino says it was the 22d October, the other refers it to the same day of the following month, but we cannot agree with either of them. Both these periods are contradicted by other statements, well ascertained. And yet Ripamonti, who wrote by order of the general council of decurions, must have had at his command many means of acquiring the necessary information; and Tadino, by reason of his office, had it in in his power, more than any other, to fix a fact of this nature. As to the rest, from the agreement of other dates, which, as we have said, appear to us better ascertained, it results that it was before the publication of the proclamation concerning passports, and if the matter was of any importance, we might also prove, or almost prove, that it must have been about the first of that month, but the reader will dispense with our pursuing the subject.

However this may be, this unfortunate fellow and messenger of misfortune, entered the city with a large bundle of clothes purchased or stolen from the Germans, went to lodge at the house of one of his relations, at the street at the oriental gate, near the capuchins. Scarce had he got there when he became ill, was taken to the hospital, and there a bubo, which appeared under his arm, induced the person who had the charge of him to suspect his disorder: on the fourth day he died.

The tribunal of health ordered his family to be interdicted from holding any intercourse wtth others, and his clothes, and the bed on which he had laid at the hospital, were burnt. Two servants who had waited upon him, and a good friar who had attended him, fell sick also in a few days, and died of the plague.—The doubts that had been entertained from the beginning of the nature of the complaint, and the precautions used in consequence, stopped the contagion from being further propagated.

But the soldier had left behind him a seed that was not long in germinating. The first person in whom it broke out, was the master of the house where he had lodged, one Carlo Colonna, a lute player. All the occupants of that house, were, by order of the tribunal of health, taken to the lazaretto, where the greater part of them took to their beds, and a few of them died very soon after of manifest contagion.

In the city, that which had been spread by

* Vita di Federigo Borromeo, compilato da Francesco Rivola. Milano, 1666, p. 584.

these pepole, and by their clothes and other things, that had been conveyed away by relations, lodgers, and servants, to prevent their being burnt by order of the tribunal, as well the additional contagion that had been introduced by the defect in the orders of the authorities, neglect in their execution, and dexterity in eluding them, was brooding and creeping on slowly all the rest of the year, and the first months of the following year, 1630. From time to time, now in this, now in that quarter, some one was seized by it, and a death would occasionally occur: the variety of these cases kept down apprehensions about the plague, and confirmed still more the generality in that stupid and homicidal belief that it was not the plague, nor ever had been so. Many physicians too, echoing the voice of the people, (was that voice, in this case, the voice of God?) derided these sinister auguries, and the threatening prognostications of a few: they had names of diseases in readiness to give to every case of plague they were called in to, whatever the symptoms or indications might be.

The information of these cases when it did reach the tribunal, came tardily, and was usually very uncertain. The fear of being found contumacious, and of being sent to the lazaretto, sharpened their wits: cases were suppressed, the grave diggers and the magistrates were corrupted; even from the inferior officers of the tribunal, that were deputed to examine the dead bodies, false certificates were procured with money.

But, as every time the tribunal succeeded in ascertaining cases of contagion, it ordered the clothes to be burnt, cut off all intercourse with houses, and sent families to the lazaretto, it may be easily imagined how strong the anger and the murmurs of the population were, "both of the nobles, the merchants, and the common people,"* persuaded as they all were, that these were vexations without cause or utility. The chief odium fell upon the two physicians, Tadino and the senator Settala, son of the head physician, to such a point, that they could not even cross the market place, without being violently abused, and sometimes having stones thrown at them. And certainly it deserves to be recorded; the singular position of these men for several months, who saw a horrible scourge approaching, who made the most resolute efforts to meet and arrest it, who found besides the arduousness of their undertaking, obstacles from every quarter in the will of the people they sought to serve, who were the objects of public reproaches, and were called enemies of their country. *Pro patriæ hostibus*, says Ripamonti.†

The other physicians who were convinced, like them, of the reality of the contagion, who suggested precautions, and who endeavored to communicate to others the painful certainty they were under, shared this hatred. The least violent taxed them with being dupes, and with obstinacy, the others said it was evident imposture, and called them an organized cabal, that wanted to grow rich out of the public dread.

The head physician Ludovico Settala, almost an octogenarian, who had been a professor of medicine in the university of Pavia, afterwards of moral philosophy at Milan, the author of many works then enjoying a high reputation, well known for having been called to the chairs of the universities of Ingolstadt, Pisa, Bologna, and Padua, and for having declined them all, was a man of the greatest authority in his time. To a reputation for science, was added that of a well spent life; and with the public admiration, he enjoyed the public esteem, on account of his great charity in prescribing for and doing good to the poor. It is a thing which somewhat disturbs and saddens the great esteem inspired by these merits, but which then must have increased the respect entertained for him, that he partook of the common and most fatal prejudices of his contemporaries: he was in advance of them, but still formed a part of the great mass, a circumstance that sometimes is the cause of misfortune, and which frequently causes men to lose the authority they had otherwise acquired. But the reputation which he enjoyed did not suffice to subdue the common opinion in this affair of the pestilence, it could not even protect him from the animosity and the insults of that portion of the people that passes easily from opinion to demonstration, and actual violence.

One day when he was going in his litter to see his patients, some men began to gather around him, saying he was the head of those who insisted upon it that it was the plague, that it was him who terrified the whole city with his severe aspect and grey beard, all to give work to the doctors. The crowd and the riot increased so much, that the bearers seeing the matter becoming serious, sought an asylum for their master in a friendly house, which fortunately was near. This he got, for clearly perceiving and stating the truth, and for trying to save from the plague many thousands of persons; the same man who had co-operated at a consultation, to torment as a witch, by pincers and hot irons, a poor unfortunate woman, because her master had a pain in his stomach, and a former master of hers had been enamored of her;* an act which procured him an universal eulogium for his wisdom, and what is intolerable to think upon, a new title to the public gratitude.

Towards the end of March, first at the quarter of the oriental gate, then in every other part of the city, cases began to grow frequent, deaths, with uncommon symptoms of spasms, palpitations, lethargy and delirium, with discoloration of the flesh and buboes. The deaths

* Tardino, p. 73. † Page 251.

* Storia di Milano del Conte Pietro Verri. Milano 1825, tom. iv. 155.

were rapid, violent, and not unfrequently sudden, without any preceding indications of sickness. The physicians opposed to the opinion of contagion, and being unwilling to confess what they had before derided, yet being obliged to give a distinct name to a new scourge, now too general and too obvious, to be without one, called it a malignant fever, a pestilent fever. A wretched evasion, and mockery of words, which produced great injury, for whilst it appeared to acknowledge the truth, it discredited what it was of the greatest importance to believe, that the disorder was communicated by actual contact. The magistrates, like persons awoke from a deep sleep, began to pay more attention to the urgencies and propositions of the tribunal of health, to give effect to its edicts, to the sequestrations ordered, and to the quarantines it directed. Funds were continually demanded to supply the daily expenses of the lazaretto, and various other services, and they were required of the decurions, until it was decided (which I believe it never was but when they were furnished) whether these expenses should be borne by the city or the royal treasury.

The great chancellor also pressed the decurions, by order of the governor, who was again gone to besiege that unfortunate place Casale, the senate was likewise urgent with them, to adopt some system for supplying the city with provisions, lest the contagion unfortunately spreading itself, all communication with the neighboring country should be cut off; and that means might be found to maintain a great portion of the population, which could now find no employment. The decurions endeavored to procure money, by loans and taxes, and of what they could collect they gave a part to the tribunal of health, and a part to the poor: they also purchased a little grain, and met the wants of the people partially. But the distress was not yet at its height.

At the lazaretto, where the population, although decimated every day, was still daily increasing, it was a most arduous undertaking to secure assistance and subordination, to enforce the separations which had been prescribed to be observed, to maintain finally, or to speak more properly, to establish the regulations ordained by the tribunal of health; for, from the first moment, every thing had been in confusion on account of the insubordination of the numbers shut up there, and the negligence and connivance of the officers. The tribunal and the decurions not knowing how to establish order, had recourse to the capuchins, and requested the father commissary,—as they called him, of the province, who acted at this time for the provincial father, dead a short time before,—to furnish them with an able person to govern this desolate kingdom. The commissary proposed to them for this place one father Felice Casati, a man of mature age, who had a great reputation for benevolence, activity, gentleness, as well as strength of mind, and which, as was shown in the end, was well merited; and for a companion and assistant to him, they gave one father Michele Pozzobonelli, who was yet a young man, but grave and severe in his thoughts as well as his countenance. They were both most willingly accepted, and on the 30th of March they entered the lazaretto. The president of the tribunal of health took them through the place, as if to give them possession of it, and having called together the servants and officials of every description, announced to them all that father Felice was constituted president of that place, with plenary authority. And as the wretched assemblage became more numerous, other capuchins came, acting as superintendants, confessors, administrators, overseers of the sick, cooks, washers, and whatever was wanting.—Father Felice, under continual fatigue and anxiety, went the rounds day and night, into the passages, the rooms, and every part, sometimes carrying a stick, but often armed with nothing but his frowns: he encouraged and regulated the servants in their duties, quieted the tumults, adjusted their quarrels, threatened, punished, reprehended, comforted, dried the tears of others and shed his own. He caught the plague at the beginning, but was cured, and resumed with renewed alacrity the duties he had undertaken. His brethren, for the greater part, closed, but joyfully, their mortal career there.

Certainly a dictatorship of this kind was an extraordinary remedy, as strange as the calamity, and as the times; and if this fact alone had come down to us, it would have been a sufficient proof of a singularly deranged state of society. But the courage, the labor, the sacrifice of those friars, deserves to be mentioned with respect and tenderness, with that kind of gratitude which is felt sincerely, for great services rendered by men to their fellow-men.—To die for the sake of doing good, has been esteemed a noble and beautiful act in all times, and under any state of things. "For if these fathers had not been there," says Tadino, "certainly the city would have been entirely desolated, and it was a miraculous thing how in so short a space of time they could have done so much for the public good, and how without any aid, or very little from the city, by their industry and prudence they could support so many thousand poor people in the lazaretto."

But the obstinate denial by the public of their being any plague, naturally yielded and diminished in proportion as the disease spread itself, and before their eyes, evidently by contact and communication, and the more, when having for some time been confined to the poor, it began to reach persons of greater consequence. And amongst these, as he was then the most noted, so even now he merits express notice, the head physician Settala. They must have said, at least, was the poor old man right? who knows? Himself, his wife, two sons, and seven servants were taken ill of the plague. He and one of his sons survived, the rest died. "These

cases," says Tadino, occurring in the city in the first houses, disposed the nobility and the common people to think; and the incredulous doctors, and the ignorant and rash mob began to shut their lips, close their teeth, and curve their eyebrows.

But the caprices, the waywardness, and the the revenge, if the term may be used, of convinced obstinacy, are at times such, that one wishes it had remained unsubdued to the last moment, against reason and evidence, and this was exactly one of those times. Those who had so resolutely denied, and for so long a period, that there existed near them and amongst them a pestilential germ, that was able through natural means to propagate itself and destroy; now not being able to deny the fact, and not being willing to attribute the mortality to the contagion they had denied, (which would have been confessing themselves to have been both dupes and very much to blame at the same time,) were now the more desirous of attributing it to some other cause, of any one whatever of those which were brought forward.—Unhappily there was one ready in the general idea and in the common tradition of the times, not in Italy alone, but in every part of Europe, where by many it was believed, that diabolical and poisonous contrivances were resorted to, by the people who had conspired to diffuse the plague, by means of contagious poisons, and sorcery. Practices of this kind had obtained credit during other pestilences, and especially that which raged in Italy half a century before. It is added, that during the past year, a despatch, signed by Philip IV, had reached the governor, in which he was informed that four Frenchmen had escaped from Madrid, who were suspected of diffusing pestiferous and poisonous ointments; directing the governor to be on the alert if they should at any time arrive at Milan. The governor had communicated this despatch to the senate and to the tribunal of health, but it does not appear that any further steps were taken. But the plague having broken out, and being recognized, the recurrence of people's minds to the fact, disposed them to attach importance to any undefined suspicion of villanous fraud, and might indeed be the immediate occasion of giving birth to one.

But two facts, one a blind and undisciplined fear, the other an undescribable sort of wickedness, were what turned the vague apprehension of some possible attempt, into strong suspicion, and with many into certainty, of a real plot of that kind. Some, who thought they had seen on the evening of the 17th May, some persons in the cathedral anointing some boards which constituted a partition between the two sexes, caused the boards together with some henches attached to them, to be taken out of the church during the night, although the president of the tribunal had been with four officials to visit the place, had examined the boards, the benches, and the font containing the holy water, and finding nothing that tended to confirm the ignorant suspicion of such an attempt to poison the people, had, to calm their imaginations, *and from abundant caution rather than from necessity*, decided, that it was sufficient to purify the boards by washing them. The mass of those things heaped up together produced a singular impression of dread in the multitude, for whom any object becomes, upon such slight grounds, a topic to talk upon. It was said, and believed generally, that all the benches, the walls, and even the ropes to ring the bells, had been anointed. Nor was it merely talked of at the time, all the memoirs of contemporaneous writers (some written several years after) which speak of the fact, speak of it with like assurance, and it would be necessary to guess at the true history of the affair, if it was not contained in a letter from the president of the tribunal to the governor, which is still preserved in the archieves of San Fedele, from which we have obtained it, and of which the words we give in italic are extracts.

The following morning, a new, a more strange, and more striking spectacle, astounded the eyes and minds of the citizens. In every part of the city the doors and walls of the houses were besmeared in large spots, and bedaubed with some whitish yellow filth or other, as if laid on with a sponge. Whether it was a wicked joke to raise up a still more clamorous apprehension, or a sinister design to increase the public confusion, or whatever it was, the affair is attested in such a way, that it seems more unreasonable to attribute it altogether to the imagination, than to that melancholy proneness to do what is wrong, by no means new in the human mind, nor unwont to exhibit itself in this manner, in any place, and it may be said, in every age. Ripamonti, who not unfrequently laughs at this affair of annointing things, and still oftener deplores the popular credulity, declares that he witnessed this daubing, and describes it.* In the letter we have before alluded to, the members of the tribunal relate the affair in the same terms; they talk of examinations, of experiments made with the stuff upon dogs, without producing any bad effects, and add, that they believe, *the audacious act had rather proceeded from insolence, than from any wicked intentions*, a thought that indicates in them, up to that period, an easy state of mind, that prevented their seeing what was not to be seen. The other contemporaneous memoirs, without speaking of their concurrence in the existence of the fact, hint generally, that it had been from the first the opinion of many, that that daubing of the doors and walls had been done as a joke; not one of them says that this was denied, and they certainly would have mentioned it, had it

*Et nos quoque invimus visere. Maculæ erant sparsim inæqualiterque manantes, veluti si quis haustam spongia saniem adspersisset, impressissetve parieti; et januæ passin ostiaque ædium eadem adspergine contaminata cernebantur. P. 75.

been so, if it had been only to call those who were of a different opinion extravagant people.

I have thought it not out of place to relate and put together these particulars of such a strange delusion, a part of which is very little known, and another part altogether unknown; for in the errors, and especially in the errors of the multitude, what is the most useful and interesting to observe, appears to me, to be the precise course they take, their character, and the means by which they take possession of the human mind, and acquire the ascendancy over it.

The city was in a general commotion, the masters of the houses had all the places that were besmeared smoked with burnt straw.—Passengers in the streets stopped, looked at them, and shivered with horror. Foreigners, suspected merely because they were so, and easily recognized by their dress, were arrested in the streets by the people, and sent to prison. Interrogatories were made, the arrested were examined, as well as the accusers and the witnesses; no one was found guilty, men's minds were still capable of doubting, of comparing, and of understanding. The tribunal of health published a proclamation, promising a reward and impunity for the discovery of the perpetrators of the fact. *Nevertheless, it not appearing expedient to us*, says the tribunal in the letter we have cited, which bears date the 21st May,—but which was evidently written on the 19th, the printed proclamation having that date, —*that this crime should altogether escape punishment, especially in such dangerous and suspicious times, for the consolation and tranquillity of this people, and with a view to get at some indications of the fact, we have this day published a proclamation, &c.* In this document however, we find no allusion, of a distinct character, to that reasonable and tranquilizing conjecture which had been forwarded to the governor, a fact, that whilst it condemns the furious prejudice of the people, makes their own condescension the more blamable, as it might lead to pernicious results.

Whilst the tribunal was endeavoring to discover the author of the disturbance, many of those constituting the public, had, as it often happens, made the discovery. Those who believed he annointing matter to be infectious, in part believed that it was a piece of vengeance of Don Gonzalo Fernandez di Cordova, for the insults he received at his departure, whilst others thought it was a device of Cardinal Richelieu, to desolate Milan and make himself master of it without trouble: there were some, but whose reasons we are not acquainted with, attributed it to Count Callalto, Wallenstein, to this, and to that Milanese gentleman. There were not wanting, as we have said, of those who saw in the act nothing but a wanton piece of mischief, and laid it to the account of the students, the gentry, and the officers who were annoyed at the seige of Casale. It was probably owing to their not perceiving, as it had been dreaded, that an universal infection and mortality had followed the act, that their first apprehensions were calmed, and they appeared to become indifferent to it.

There were, however, still a certain number of persons not yet persuaded that the plague existed. And because, as well in the lazaretto as in the city, a few recovered, "it was said" (the last reasons for an opinion which has been overthrown by evidence, are always curious to know,) by the common people, and by many partial physicians, that it was not the true plague, for that would have destroyed every body.* To remove all doubt, the tribunal adopted an expedient fitted for the urgency, a method of speaking to the eyes, such as the state of things seemed to require, or to suggest. On one of the festival days of the Pentecost, the citizens were accustomed to go to the cemetery of San Gregorio, out of the oriental gate, to pray for the souls of those who had died of the former contagion, and whose bodies were buried there; and making this act of devotion an occasion for some spectacle and amusement, every one went there dressed in the best manner.

Amongst other persons, there had died that day of the plague, an entire family. At the moment of the greatest concourse, amidst the carriages, those on horseback, and people on foot, the dead bodies of that family, by order of the tribunal, were brought to the cemetery, naked, upon a car, so that the multitude might see with their own eyes, the manifest marks, and horrible seal of the pestilence. A shout of horror and dread arose wherever the car passed, a continued murmur reigned where it had passed, and another fearful one preceded it. The plague was less doubted, and every day made itself new converts, a state of things that served to increase the extension of it.

At first then it was not the plague, absolutely not, in no manner whatever; it was even prohibited to use the word. Then it was admitted to be a pestilential fever, the idea of the plague obliquely insinuating itself in the adjective form. Next, it was not the true plague, that is to say, it was a sort of plague, but only in a certain sense; not the plague completely and entirely, but a thing that no other name but that could be found for. At length it got to be the plague without doubt and without dispute; but here another idea attaches itself, that of poisoning and sorcery, altering and confounding the idea expressed by the simple word, which, however, it is now too late to dispense with.

I do not think it requires to be much versed in the history of ideas and words, to see that many of them have had a similar course.—Heaven be praised, there are not many of the character and importance of this, and which vindicate their identity at so great a cost, and to which accessories can be attached of this kind. We might however, in small and great

* Tardino, p. 93.

affairs, avoid in a great degree such a long and tortuous direction, adopting the method which has been so long since proposed, of observing, listening, comparing, and thinking before talking.

But as to talking, it is such a simple matter, and so much more easy to do than all those other faculties put together, that even we, I speak of men in general, are not a little to be pitied.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The difficulty continually increasing of supplying the painful exigency of circumstances, it was determined by the council of decurions on the 4th of March, to have recourse for aid, and as a favor, to the governor; and, on the 22d, two of that body were despatched to the camp, to represent to him the great distresses of the city, the enormous expenses, the treasury exhausted and indebted; the future rents pledged, the current taxes unpaid on account of the general impoverishment produced by so many causes, and the destruction of other resources by the military: to lay before him for his consideration, that by uninterrupted laws and custom, and by a special decree of Charles V, the expenses of the plague were borne by the public revenue; that during the pestilence of 1576, the marquis of Ayamonte, then governor, had not only suspended the impositions of the chamber of accounts, but had relieved the city by advancing 40,000 crowns from the said chamber: finally they were to ask four things, that the impositions should be suspended, as at that period; that the chamber should advance money; that the governor should inform the king of the wretchedness of the city and the province, and that the Dutchy should be excused from quartering any more troops, as it had been consumed and destroyed by those who had passed.

Spinola returned for answer, condolences, and new exhortations; it grieved him that he could not be in the city, that he might exert every effort to relieve it, but trusted that his place would be supplied by the zeal of the members of the tribunal: it was a moment to expend money without any regard to economy, and to avail themselves of every ingenious resource. As to the demands made of him, he would attend to them in the most efficacious way that time and the present necessity admitted of.—But this was all that was done, new journies were undertaken, and new demands and new answers took place, but I do not discover that they came to any closer conclusions. At a later period, when the pestilence was at its height, the governor thought proper to delegate his authority by letters-patent, to the great chancellor Ferrer, having, as he stated, to attend to the affairs of the war.

Together with that determination of the tribunal, the decurions adopted another, which was, to request the cardinal archbishop to order a solemn procession to be made of the body of St. Charles through the city.

The good prelate refused for many reasons. He was not pleased with the reliance they appeared to place upon means that were so purely arbitrary, and feared that if they did not produce the expected effects, as he doubted might be the case, their faith might give rise to some scandal.* He feared besides, that, *if there really were those anointers*, the procession might prove too commodious an opportunity for the commission of crime; *and if there were not*, such an assemblage of itself could not but spread the contagion, *a much greater danger*.†

The suspicion of these anointers, which had been lulled, had in the meantime broken out again, more generally and more furious than ever.

It had been again observed, or this time men had seemed to have observed, that the walls, the doors of public and private buildings, and the knockers to private doors had been anointed. The news of this discovery flew from mouth to mouth, and as usually occurs where prejudice is strong, the report of the fact produced the same effect that ocular demonstration of it would have done. Their minds still more embittered by the presence of evils, irritated by the obstinacy of the danger, more willingly lent themselves to the belief. Anger is impatient to punish,—and as a very worthy writer‡ acutely observes on this head,—prefers to attribute evil to human wickedness, against which it can direct its tormenting activity, rather than trace it to a cause, against which there is nothing left but resignation. An exquisite poison, instantaneous, and most penetrating, were words more than sufficient to explain the violence, with all the most obscure and irregular accidents of the disease. The poison was said to be composed of toads, of serpents, of the pus and foam of infected persons, and of every thing that the most perverse and wild imaginations could conceive that was filthy and atrocious. To these sorcery was added, through the efficacy of which every effect became possible, every objection lost its force, every difficulty was resolved. If the result had not immediately followed that first unction, the reason was obvious, it had been an abortive attempt of poisoners yet novices; now they were perfect in the art, and their inclina-

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* Memoria delle cose notabili successe in Milano intorno al mal contagioso l'anno, 1630, etc. raccolte da D. Pio la Croce di Milano, 1730. And evidently taking from an inedited MSS. of the author, who lived at the period of the pestilence; if, indeed, it is not a simple copy of it, rather than a new compilation.

† Si unguenta scelerata et unctores in urbe essent... Si non essent... certiusque adeo malum. Ripamonti, p. 188.

‡ P. Verri, Osservazioni sulla tortura Scrittori italiani di economia politica, parte moderna. tom. 17, p. 203.

tions more bent upon the infernal attempt.—Now any one who continued to maintain that it had been a joke, and who ventured to deny the existence of a conspiracy, passed for a blind and obstinate person, if he did not fall under the suspicion of being interested in diverting the public suspicion from the truth, of being an accomplice, and an *anointer*. The word soon became common, and took a solemn and tremendous signification. With the persuasion that there were such persons as anointers, it seemed as if they must be infallibly discovered, all were on the watch, every act created suspicion, and suspicion became on the slightest grounds certainty, and this last made men furious.

Ripamonti gives us two examples of this, stating that he had selected them not as the most remarkable that occurred at the period, but that he could speak of them both as having witnessed them.

In the church of St. Anthony, upon a day of some particular solemnity, an old man, more than eighty years old, after having prayed on his knees, wished to seat himself, and before he did so, dusted the bench with the end of his cloak. "That old man is anointing the benches," exclaimed all together, some women who saw him doing it. The people that were in the church (in the church?) fell upon the old man, they pulled out his grey hairs, struck him, and kicked him, dragged him out half alive, to take him to prison, before the judges, and to the torture. "I saw him treated in that manner," says Ripamonti, "nor could I learn what was the end of it, but believe he could not survive it more than a few moments."

The other case, which occurred the following day, was equally strange, though not equally fatal. Three young Frenchmen, companions, one a man of letters, another a painter, and the third a mechanic, being come to see Italy, to study its antiquities, or to seek an opportunity of making money, were together in some place at the outside of the cathedral, and were examining it attentively. Two or three passers-by stopped, formed a group, just to look on, and keep an eye on them, whose dress, hair, and wallets, proclaimed them to be foreigners, and what was worse, Frenchmen.—As if to ascertain whether the cathedral was built of marble, they stretched out their hands to touch it. That was enough! They were surrounded, seized, ill treated, and driven furiously with blows to prison. By good luck, the palace of justice is not far from the cathederal, and what was still more fortunate, they were pronounced innocent, and released.

Nor did such things occur only in the city—this kind of delusion had propagated itself as well as the contagion. If a traveler was met by any country people out of the high road, or when he was in it if he appeared to be loitering, or was stretched out on the ground to rest himself; if any unknown person was seen that had any thing strange about him, an unprepossessing countenance, or an unusual dress, there were anointers.* At the first information given by any person whatever, even at the screaming out of a boy, the bell was rung and the people collected: the unhappy wretches were pelted with showers of stones, or were seized and furiously carried to prison. And prison, up to a certain period, was a harbor of safety.†

But the decurions, not discouraged by the refusal of the sage prelate, repeated their instances with him, loudly seconded by the public voice. He persisted for some time, and sought to dissuade them; so much and not more was the wisdom of one man able effect against the will of the times, and the obstinacy of the many. In that state of opinions, with such an idea of the danger, confused and contested as it was at that period, and far from the enlightened views we have in our own days, we can easily comprehend how his excellent reasons, might, even in his own mind, be subdued by the insufficient ones of others. Whether in yielding, a weakness of the will had or had not a part, is a mystery of the human heart. Certainly if in any case we may seem to be able to attribute error altogether to intellect, it is when we are judging the few, (and he was one of the number) in whose whole life there appears a determined obedience to the voice of conscience, without relation to temporal interests of any kind whatever. Their instances then being repeated, he yielded, consented to the procession, and to the general desire and anxiety that the coffin where the relics of St. Charles were deposited, should be exposed for eight days, to the whole public, upon the principal altar of the cathedral.

I do not find, that the tribunal of health, or any one else, made any opposition or remonstrance of any kind, but only that the tribunal directed some precautions to be taken, which without obviating the danger, still conveyed a feeling respecting it. Regulations of a stricter kind were ordered respecting the admission of persons into the city; and to ensure the execution of them, the gates were ordered to be closed; and that the assemblage of the people might be excluded as far as it was possible, from the infected, and those who were suspicioned of being so, the doors of the houses that were under sequestration were nailed up; the number of which, as far as the assertion of a writer of that period may be relied on, was about five hundred.‡

Three days were spent in preparations; the 11th of June, which was the day fixed upon, the procession, at the dawn, moved from the cathedral. A long crowd of people preceded it, women for the greater part, their faces covered with ample veils, many of them barefooted and dressed in sackcloth. Then followed the arts, preceded by their standards, the confraterni-

* Unori. † Ripam. p. 91, 92.

‡ Alleggiamento dello stato di Milano, etc. di C. G. Cavatio della Somaglia. Milano, 1653, p. 482.

ties dressed in various devices and colors; next the friars, then the secular clergy, all with the symbols of their rank, carrying a lighted wax candle. In the centre, amidst the thickest light of the torches, where the loudest chant was heard, the coffin, under a rich canopy, was borne, supported by four canons dressed in great pomp. Through the crystal sides of the coffin the venerated body was seen, clothed in splendid pontifical habits, with a mitre on the head; amidst the mutilated and deranged features some vestiges might yet be perceived of the former face, such as it is represented in images, and as some remembered to have seen and honored it during his life. Behind the spoils of the deceased pastor, (says Ripamonti,*) from whom, principally, we take this description, and nearest to them, on account of his blood and dignity, as well as his personal claims, came the archbishop Federigo. The remaining part of the clergy followed him, and next to them were the magistrates who presided upon great occasions: then the nobles, some of them splendidly adorned to honor this solemn act of religion, others, as a mark of penitence, humbly attired, or with their feet naked, covered with sackcloth, their hoods drawn over their heads, all of them with large torches. Last of all came a mixed crowd of the people.

The streets where the procession passed were festively decorated; the rich had exposed all their most splendid furniture; the fronts of the houses of the poor were dressed by the richer neighbors, or by the public: leafy boughs were fixed about the decorations; pictures, mottos, and devices were hanging in every direction. Upon the window sills were numerous vases, antiquities, and precious things, wi" flambeaux every where. At many of the windows the sick, who where secluded, were witnesses of the pomp, and mingled their prayers with those of the procession. The other streets were silent and deserted, except where some, also from the windows were listening to catch the wandering sound; others, and amongst these were nuns, had got upon the roofs, to try whether from that distance they could get a sight of the coffin, the procession or any thing else.

The procession passed through the different quarters of the city; at each of the small squares, where the principal streets enter into the Borghi or main ones, and which then preserved the ancient name of Carrobii, now retained only by one of them, it made a halt, and the coffin was brought near to the cross, which in each of them had been erected in the preceding pestilence by St. Charles, and a few of which still exist. It was past midday when it got back to the cathedral.

On the succeeding day, amidst the presumptuous confidence which reigned, and the fanatical certainty which many enjoyed that the procession would certainly put an end to the plague, lo, and behold, the deaths in every class, increased to such a disproportioned height, in every part of the city, by such a sudden leap, that it was scarce possible for any one to doubt that the procession itself was the true cause But, oh strange and distressing force of general prejudice! not to the so much prolonged and close pressure of persons, not to the infinite multiplication of incidents of fortuitous contact, was this result attributed; but to the facility which the anointers had enjoyed of perpetrating upon a great scale their iniquitous designs. It was said, that mixed up in the crowd, they had infected with their unguents as many persons as they had been able to do; but as this did not appear an appropriate and sufficient way to account for a mortality so vast and wide spread, in every class of society, and, as it appears, it had not been possible for any eye, however attentive, and inquisitively suspicious to perceive any thing like ointments or spots or stains of any kind during the whole procession, they had recourse, in order to explain the fact, to the old story that still maintained its place in the science of the day, such as it was then in Europe, of poisonous and magical powders: it was asserted that these powders scattered along the streets and principally at those places where the procession stopped, attached themselves to the skirts of of garments, and especially to the people's feet, a great portion of whom had gone that day barefooted. "The same day of the procession, witnessed," says a contemporaneous writer,* "a conflict between piety and impiety, perfidy and sincerity, loss and gain." Whilst instead of this, it was poor human weakness struggling with the phantasms created by itself.

From that day, the fury of the contagion, kept on increasing, and in a short time there was scarce a house that was not infected. The population of the lazaretto, according to Somaglia, whom we before quoted, soon rose from two to twelve thousand persons, and in time, as all agree, it amounted to sixteen thousand. On the 4th of July, as I find in another letter of the conservators of health to the governor, the daily mortality exceeded five hundred.—Afterwards, and when it reached its height, it went up to, and remained at—according to the most general computation, twelve hundred and fifteen hundred: and if we are to believe Tardino,† it more than once exceeded three thousand five hundred in one day.

It may be imagined what distress the decurions were in, upon whom was laid the responsibility of providing for the public necessities, and of repairing whatever was susceptible of remedy in a disaster of this kind. It was necessary every day to make new arrangements, and to increase the number of people in the public service of every kind. The *Monat-*

* Pages 62, 66.

* Agostino Lampugnano, La Pestilenza seguita in Milano, l'anno 1630. Milano, 1634, p. 44.

† Pages 115, 117.

ti, a denomination very ancient, and of obscure origin, was the name given to those who officiated in the most painful and dangerous services of the pestilence, who removed the dead from their houses, from the streets, and the lazaretto, and drove them to the pits to be buried; whose business also it was to conduct the sick to the lazaretto, to nurse them there, to burn and purify every thing that was infected, or was supposed to be so. The *Apparitori* were persons whose especial office it was to precede the cars, giving notice to passengers with the sound of a bell, that they should keep out of the way: then there were commissaries who regulated both these classes, and they were under the immediate orders of the tribunal of health. It was necessary to keep the lazaretto supplied with physicians, surgeons, medicine, food, and every thing requisite for such an infirmary, and to find and prepare new lodgings for the new cases that came. To this end, they constructed in great haste cabins made of wood and straw in the interior part of the lazaretto. A new building was constructed, entirely of cabins, and enclosed with boards, capable of containing four thousand persons: and this not sufficing, two others were decreed and commenced, but on account of the want of materials of every kind, they were left incomplete. Means, persons, and courage, all diminished in proportion as the want of them increased.

And not only was the execution always in arrears of the plans conceived, and the orders issued; not only, many necessitous cases, which were too well known, were poorly provided for, even by words; things reached that degree of impotence and desperation, that many cases, and those of the most piteous kind, and of the greatest urgency, were not attended to at all. —An immense number of children, for instance, whose mothers had died of the plague, perished in a state of entire abandonment: the tribunal proposed to establish an asylum for these, and for necessitous lying-in women, that something might be done for them, but nothing could be effected. "The decurions of the city, however," says Tardino, "deserved to be pitied; afflicted, sorrowful, and harassed as they were by the excesses of the soldiery, who were perfectly lawless, and who had no respect for any body, especially in the unhappy dutchy; neither aid nor provisions could be obtained from the governor, nor any thing but a remark "that it was war time, and the soldiers must be well treated." Of such great importance was it to take Casale! so much attraction had the praise of victory for him, without reference to the cause, or end for which he was fighting!

At length, the ample and only pit there was, and which had been dug near the lazaretto, being entirely filled with dead bodies, and in every part of the city, the new corpses which every day produced, in increased numbers, lying unburied, the magistrates, after in vain seeking for laborers to employ at this melancholy work, were brought to the necessity of declaring that they no longer knew what to do. Nor do we see what the result would have been, if extraordinary succor had not come to their aid. The president of the tribunal, in despair, and with tears in his eyes, asked those worthy friars who managed the lazaretto, to aid him, and father Michele engaged at the end of four days to clear the city entirely of the dead, and at the end of eight, to prepare pits sufficient not only for the present necessity, but for the worst state of things that could possibly occur for the future. With a friar, his companion, and with some officers given to him by the president as his assistants, he left the city to seek for some country people, and partly by the authority of the tribunal, partly by that of his habit and his words, he collected two hundred, and set three divisions of them at different excavations: he then despatched Monatti from the lazaretto to collect the dead, so that at the day fixed, his promise was entirely accomplished.

Upon one occasion the lazaretto was left unprovided with physicians, and with offers of large stipends and honors, some were obtained, but with great trouble and not immediately, but far beneath the number actually required. Frequently provisions were wanting, so as to create apprehensions that the population would die of want; and more than once, when they were endeavoring by every means to procure commodities or money, scarcely hoping to get them, and then not to get them in season, abundant subsidies came in time, the unexpected tribute of private compassion; for amidst the general stupefaction, the indifference for others, springing from the apprehensions of men on their own account, there were always minds awake to charity; others there were in whose breasts charity sprung up, when earthly pleasures were all subdued, just as in the destruction and flight of many, whose duty it was to superintend and to provide, some there were who stood to their posts, with sound health and unsubdued courage: there were also others who, impelled by piety, bravely took upon themselves the duty of assisting the sick, which they were not officially called to do.

But where the most general and voluntary fidelity to the difficult duties of the moment, shone forth, was amongst the ecclesiastics.—At the lazarettos, and in the city, their assistance never was wanting; where suffering was, they were sure to be found: they were always seen mixed up, and scattered about amongst the languishing and the dying, even when they themselves were often languishing and dying. Of spiritual succors they were prodigal, and of temporal ones also, as much as they were able, they lent themselves to every service where they could be useful. More than sixty parish priests, of the city alone, died of contagion—about eight out of nine of the whole number.

Federigo gave to all—as incitement and example was to be expected from him, almost all his archiepiscopal family had perished around

him; and his relations, magistrates of the highest rank, and the neighboring princes soliciting him to withdraw from the danger to some solitary villa, he rejected their counsel, and instances, with the same courage that led him to write to his parish priests, "may you be disposed to abandon this mortal life, rather than this family, these children of ours: go with your hearts full of love to front the pestilence, as you would go to a life, to a reward, as long as there is a soul to gain to Christ."* Still he neglected no precaution that might prevent him from doing his duty, respecting which he also gave instructions to his clergy, yet at the same time he was indifferent to, nor seemed to shun any danger, where it was possible to do good, by encountering it. Without speaking of ecclesiastics, with whom he always was, to praise and regulate their zeal, to excite those who went coldly to work, to replace those at the posts whom death had carried away, he was desirous that access should be free to whoever wished to see him. He visited the lazarettos to give consolation to the sick, and to encourage the assistants; and ran through the city, carrying succors to the poor people who were sequestered in their houses, stopping at the doors, and beneath the windows, to listen to their complaints, and give words of consolation and encouragement in return. Thus did he go about and live in the midst of the pestilence, astonished himself at the end of it, that he should come out of it harmless.

Thus in public misfortunes, and in continued perturbations, to whatever extent they may be carried, of public tranquillity, we always witness an increase, nay a sublimation of virtue, but unfortunately there is also never wanting an increase, usually much more general, of perversity. This, also, was the case at present.—The scoundrels that the plague spared and did not strike down, found in the common confusion, and the relaxation of the public authority, a new occasion for activity, and a new security for impunity at the same time. Indeed, the practical part of that authority fell for the greater part into the hands of the worst of them.—In the occupation of monatti and apparitori, those men only engaged in general, for whom the attractions of rapine and licentiousness were stronger than the terrors of contagion, and every natural antipathy. The strictest rules were imposed upon them, the severest penalties intimated, stations were assigned to them, and commissaries, as we have said before, placed over them. Over both of them noblemen and magistrates were appointed in every quarter, with authority to provide summarily upon every occasion where discipline was required. Regulations of this kind produced an effect for a while, but as the deaths and the general abandonment increased, with the want of presence of mind of those who survived, these men came at last to be independent of all authority, and constituted themselves, especially the monatti, the arbiters of every thing. They entered the houses as masters, and as enemies, and without speaking of the plunder they made, or of the manner in which they treated the unhappy wretches reduced by the plague, to submit to their indignities, they laid their infected and villanous hands upon those who were well, upon children, parents, husbands, wives, threatening to drag them to the lazaretto, if they did not ransom themselves, or did not cause themselves to be ransomed at their own price. At other times, they fixed a price upon their services, refusing to remove the dead, which were in a state of putrefaction, if they were not paid so many crowns. It was said, (and between the stupidity of some, and the villany of others, it is equally unsafe to believe or to disbelieve) and Tadino affirms it to be so,* that both the monatti and apparitori let infected things drop on purpose from the cars, to propagate and increase the pestilence, which had come for them a revenue, a kingdom, a feast. Other wretches, pretending to be monatti, carrying bells attached to their feet, as was prescribed to them, that notice might be thus given of their approach, introduced themselves into the houses, in order to act their own pleasure. In some of those which were open and without inhabitants, or inhabited only by some invalid, or dying person, thieves entered without any restraint to get booty; others were surprized and entered by the birri, who committed robberies and excesses of every kind.

At an equal pace with the perversity, the madness of the people increased. All the ruling errors more or less, derived from the astonishment and the agitation of the public mind, acquired an extraordinary force, and a more extensive and precipitous application. Every thing served to strengthen and to increase that especial madness about anointing; the which, in its effects and violent action, was frequently, as we have seen, another perversity. The idea of the supposed danger besieged and harrassed their minds infinitely more than the real and present danger. "And whilst," says Ripamonti, "the carcasses lying about, or the heaps of carcasses always before the public eye, always betwixt the feet of the living, turned the whole city into one great funeral, there was something still more fatal, a still greater public deformity in that reciprocal irritation, that licenciousness, that monstrous state of suspicion—men did not doubt their neighbors, their friends, their guests, alone; but those endearing names, those links of human charity, husband and wife, father and son, brother and brother, were objects of mutual terror, and a most horrible and unworthy thing to say! the domestic table, and the nuptial bed, were feared as so many treacheries, where poison was concealed.

The vastness and the strangeness of the supposed conspiracy disturbed all minds, and un-

* Ripamonti, p. 164.

* P. 102.

settled the entire basis of mutual confidence. Besides ambition and cupidity, which at first were imagined to be the leading motives of the anointers, people fancied and believed there existed a diabolical voluptuousness in the act, and an attraction in it that entirely governed the will. The deliriums of the sick who accused themselves of that which they had feared in others, seemed to be revelations, and rendered every thing, as it were, credible of every one. And their acts produced even a stronger effect than their words, when it occasionally happened that infected persons when delirious were seen going through motions, which they conceived must be those which the anointers used; a circumstance extremely probable, and fitted to strengthen the general belief, and the affirmations of many writers. In like manner, during the long and sad period of judicial inquisitions for witchcraft, the confessions, not always extorted, of the persons of whom it was imputed, served not a little to promote and sustain the opinion that prevailed of its existence: for when an opinion prevails of this kind, it obtains an extensive dominion over the human mind, expresses itself in every possible form, tries every method of breaking out, and runs through every degree of persuasion; so that it is difficult for all or for many to believe for a long time, that a thing however strange can be accomplished, without some one imagining he is capable of doing it himself.

Amongst the anecdotes which that delirium of the anointers produced, one of them deserves to be mentioned, on account of the credit it received, and the circulation it had. It was stated, not by all in the same manner, (that would be too singular a privilege of fables) but nearly so, that a certain person on a particular day, had seen a carriage drawn by six horses stop in the square of the cathedral, containing a great personage, having his suit along with him, of a noble aspect, but dark and embrowned, with fiery eyes, his hair standing on end, and his lips moving with a menacing motion. The spectator was invited to enter the carriage, and got in. After driving awhile, it stopped at the door of a palace, where they alighted, and he entered with the others, where he found a strange contrast of amenity and horror, deserts and gardens, caverns and halls, with phantasms seated there in council. At last large chests full of money were shown to him, and he was told he might take as much as ever he pleased, if at the same time he would accept a vessel of ointment, and go and anoint in the city with it. The which having refused to do, he found himself instantly in the same place from whence he had been taken up. This story, believed generally here, and according to Ripamonti, not sufficiently derided by many learned persons, ran through all Italy and beyond it: in Germany a drawing was made of it and printed, and the elector archbishop of Mentz, asked of cardinal Federigo in a letter, what was to be believed of the portents that were spoken of in Milan, who returned for answer that they were all dreams.

Of like value, if they were not in every thing of the same nature, were the dreams of the learned, the consequences of which were equally disastrous. The greater part of these saw as the herald and reason of all these misfortunes, the comet that appeared in the year 1628, and in a conjunction of Saturn with Jove, "approaching," as Tadino says,* "in the year 1630, so manifestly, that every one could see it. *Mortales parat morbos, miranda videntur.*"† This prediction, fabricated I cannot tell when or by whom, was, as Ripamonti says, in every mouth, even those scarce able to utter it. Another comet that appeared in June of the same year as the pestilence, was held to be another announcement, and indeed a manifest proof of the anointings.

They examined the books, and unfortunately found too many instances of the plague being thus produced, they quoted Livy, Tacitus, Dio, Homer, Ovid, and many other ancient writers who have treated of such matters; of the moderns they had still greater abundance. They cited a hundred other authors who have treated the subject doctrinally, or incidentally spoken of poisons, witchcraft, ointments, and powders. They quoted Cesalpino, Cardano, Grevino, Salio, Pareo, Schenchio, Zachia, and to end the list that fatal Delrio, who, if, the fame of authors was in proportion to the good or the evil produced by their works, ought to be one of the most famous amongst them: that Delrio, whose vigils cost more men their lives than the enterprizes of any conqueror: that Delrio, whose *magical disquisitions* (the quintescence of all the ravings that men had indulged in on that subject, up to this time) had become the most authoritative and irrefragable text book, and continued to be for a century, the rule and most potent impulse of legal, horrible and uninterrupted executions.

From the sayings of the illiterate vulgar, educated people adopted whatever was in conformity with their own notions; and from the sayings of the educated, the vulgar took whatever they could understand, after their own fashion; and of the whole of this there was formed an indigested, pitiless heap of public extravagance.

But what creates the greatest surprise, is to see the physicians, meaning those who from the first had believed in the plague, and especially Tadino who had foretold it, had observed its first approach, and kept it in his eye during its progress; who had said and insisted that it was the plague and was communicated by contact, and that if a remedy was not applied, a general infection would unsue; to see him afterwards from these circumstances draw positive conclusions in favor of poisonous and magical anointings; he who in the case of Carlo Colonna, the second who died of the plague in Milan, had remarked the delirium, as a symp-

* P. 56. † P. 273.

tom of the malady: to see him afterwards, as a proof of anointings and diabolical doings, adduce a fact of this kind, that two witnesses deposed to having heard a sick friend relate, how in the night persons had entered his room to offer him health and money, if he would anoint the houses in his neighborhood, and that on his answering that he would not, they went away, and in their place a wolf remained under the bed, and three large ugly cats on the top of it, "which remained there until day." If such nonsense had been peculiar to one man, it might be attributed to his gross ignorance, or to an idle way of treating the subject, peculiar to himself, and would not have been worth mentioning; but as it was common to many, it becomes a story of the human mind; and it is to be remarked, how a well arraigned and reasonable series of ideas, can be thrown out of order, by another series which crosses their track. As to the rest, Tardino was one of the most celebrated men of his day.

Two illustrious and deserving writers, have affirmed that cardinal Federigo himself entertained doubts respecting the fact of these anointings.* We should be desirous of paying the tribute of unblemished praise to his illustrious and amiable memory, and to represent the good prelate, in this, as in so many other things, standing in relief from the crowd of his contemporaries; but instead of this, we find ourselves constrained to observe in his person, an example of the power which universal opinion can exercise even in the noblest minds. It has been seen, at least from the manner in which Ripamonti relates his notions, how from the beginning he really entertained some doubts; he held always that the dupery, the ignorance, the fear, and the desire to excuse the long negligence in protecting themselves from the contagion, contributed much to cause the belief, that there was a great deal of exaggeration, but that taking it altogether there was something real in it.

There is preserved in the ambrosian library, a short work on the plague, written with his own hand, of which this is one of the many passages where he expresses his opinion.—"Of the method of compounding and spreading ointments of this kind, many and various things have been said; some of which we hold to be true, whilst others appear to be altogether imaginary."†

There were, however, some who thought to the end, and at all times after, that the whole was a delusion: we know this, not from themselves, for no one had the boldness to avow an opinion so much opposed to the general one: we know it from the writers who deride it, or reprehend it, or confute it, as the prejudice of a few, an error which was not expected to be openly disputed, but which existed; we know it also from one who had it from tradition. "I have found discreet people in Milan," says the good muratori, in the above quoted passage, "who had correct accounts from their ancestors, and who were quite persuaded that there was not any truth in these poisonous anointings." This we can see was a secret vent given to the truth, a domestic confidence; there was good sense in it, but it was hid under apprehensions entertained from what is called common sense.

The magistrates, thinned off every day, bewildered and confused by every thing, directed the small remains of vigilance and resolution they were capable of to these anointers, and unfortunately believed they had discovered some of them.

The sentences that were consequently passed, were certainly not the first of this kind, nor are they to be considered as phenomena in the history of jurisprudence; for to say nothing about the ancients, and merely to point to what took place in times nearer to those of which we treat; there was at Geneva in 1530, and then in 1545, and again in 1574; at Casale in Montferrat in 1536, at Padua in 1555, at Turin in 1599, at Palermo in 1526, and at Turin again in the same year 1630, trials of persons who were condemned and punished in an atrocious way; sometimes an individual, sometimes numerous unfortunate people, found guilty of having propagated the plague, with powders, ointment, and witchcraft, and sometimes altogether.

But this matter, so called, of anointings, at Milan, as it was that which made the greatest noise abroad, and lasted the longest time, so perhaps of them all it is most susceptible of examination, or to speak more exactly, there is a better field for observation, on account of the documents connected with it, being more ample and circumstantial. And although a writer we have commended recently,* has occupied himself with it, nevertheless, he having proposed, not so much to relate its history, as to get information for a more worthy and important undertaking, it has appeared to us that its history might furnish the materials of a new work. But it is not a thing to pass over with a few words, and to go into it as extensively as it deserves, would lead us too far. Besides which, the reader, after being made acquainted with these incidents, will not be very anxious to know those which we have left untold. Reserving, however, for another work to narrate them, we shall now finally return to our personages, that they may be no longer left to the very last moment.

* Muratori, Del governo della peste. Modena 1714, p. 117.—P. Verri, opuscolo citato, 261.

† Unguenta vero hæc aiebant componi conficique multifariam, fraudisque vias esse complures: quarum sane fraudum et artium, aliis quidem assentimur, alias vero fictas fuisse commentitiasque arbitramur.—De peste quæ Mediolani, anno 1630, magnam stragem edidit. Cap. V.

* P. Verri, in the little work we have cited.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

One night, towards the end of August, just in the heart of the pestilence, Don Rodrigo returned to his house in Milan, accompanied by the faithful Griso, one of the three or four, who, of all his family, had remained alive. He had left a party of friends who were in the habit of meeting to carouse, and pass away the melancholy hours; and each time that they met there were some new individuals and some of the old ones wanting. That day, he had been one of the merriest of them, and amongst other things, he had made the company laugh exceedingly at a kind of funeral eulogium he pronounced on Count Attilio, who had been carried off by the plague two days before.

On his way home, however, he felt himself ill at ease, low spirited, a weakness in his limbs, a difficulty of breathing, an internal burning, that he would fain have attributed to the wine, late sitting up, and the season. He said not a word during the walk, and the first, when they had reached the house, was to order Griso to take a light to his chamber. When they were there, Griso observed that his master's face was changed somewhat, inflamed, and his eyes protruding and glaring; he therefore kept aloof, because upon such occasions, every ruffian had got a doctor's eye, as they say.

"Nonsense, I am very well," said Don Rodrigo, who read in the action of Griso the thought that was passing in his mind. "I am very well, but I have been drinking, and perhaps have taken a little too much. That white wine that I drank! But with a good sound sleep it will pass off. I am exceedingly sleepy—take that light away, it annoys me."

"It's nothing but the white wine," said Griso, keeping always at a distance, "but lie down directly, sleep will do you good."

"Thou art in the right. If I can only sleep; as to the rest I am well. At any rate put the bell here, lest I should want something during the night; and be attentive, mind—if you should hear the bell. But I shall want nothing; take that cursed light away," he continued, whilst Griso was doing as he was ordered, drawing nigh as little as he possibly could.—"The devil, how the light annoys me!"

Griso took the light, and having wished his master a good night, left the room in haste, whilst he got under the clothes.

But they laid on him like a mountain. He kicked them off, and drew himself up to sleep, for in fact he was excessively sleepy; but scarcely had he closed his eyes, when he awoke again in a trepidation, as if some spiteful person had shook him, the fever was rising upon him, and his agitation was increasing. He thought of the debauch he had been at, of the white wine, and the uproar he had made, and wished to lay the blame upon all these things; but this idea always gave way to another that was associated with all things, which entered, as one may say, by all the senses, which had found its way into every thing that had been spoken of at their carousal, it being a much easier thing to banter about it, than to exclude it; and this was the plague.

After a long struggle, he finally got asleep, and began to dream the most obscure and confused things imaginable. Wandering from one thing to another, he at length seemed to be in a great church, far inside of it, in the midst of a crowd of people. He could not imagine how he had got there, how the thought had got into his head to go there, especially at such a time, and he worried himself about it. He looked at the persons around him, all their faces were wan, as if they had been dug out of the grave; their eyes were dull and without expression, their lips were hanging down: their clothes were all falling to rags, and through the tatters spots and tumors were seen. "Make room, fellows," he supposed himself to call out, looking at the door which was at a great distance from him, and accompanying his cry with threatening looks, without moving however, indeed shrinking into as small a compass as he could, that he might not touch the disgusting objects, that already pressed him too closely on every side. But none of these senseless figures seemed to move, nor to hear him; on the contrary they kept still closer to him. Especially it appeared to him, that some one of them, with his elbow, or with something else, pushed him in the left side, betwixt the heart and the shoulder, where he felt a painful puncture, and dreadfully oppressive. When he twisted himself to get relief from the pain, instantly something else not visible, inflicted a new sensation in the same place. Furious at this, he sought to lay his hand on his sword, when suddenly it seemed to him, whilst in the crowd, that it had risen along his body, and that it was the pummel which hurt him in that place, putting his hand there, he found no sword, but his own touch renewed the pain more violent. He called out, panted, and tried to cry still louder, when behold all the people's faces were turned in a particular direction. Looking there, likewise, he perceived a pulpit, and, lo! a convex mass, smooth and shining, was seen rising up from within it, till it distinctly became a bald crown, then two eyes appeared, a face, and a long and white beard; a complete friar, as far as to where his girdle touched the edge of the pulpit—Father Christopher himself!

The figure, glancing a quick look at all the auditory, seemed, as Don Rodrigo thought, at last to fix his countenance upon him, raising at the same time his hand, exactly in the attitude he assumed in the room on the ground floor of his palace. Then he also raised his hand in a rage, and made an effort as if he would stretch himself out to pull down that arm thus lifted in the air; but a sound that was roaring imperfectly in his throat, burst forth into a violent scream, and he awoke. He let fall the arm which he really had raised up, and

was for some time troubled in the attempt to recover his consciousness, and to open his eyes well, for the full light of day annoyed him no less than that of the candle had done; he recognized his bed, his room, perceived that the whole had been a dream: the church, the people, the friar, all had vanished: all save one thing, the pain in his left side. Along with this he felt an accelerated and distressing motion of the heart; in his ears he heard a rumbling noise, a fire was within him, and a weight upon all his members, more intolerable than when he went to bed. He hesitated awhile about examining the part that gave him pain, at last he uncovered it, cast a terrified look at it, and beheld a frightful tumor of a livid purple color.

The man perceived that he was lost. The terror of death took possession of him, and perhaps in a still stronger degree the terror of becoming a prey to the monatti, and of being taken and thrown into the lazaretto. Whilst he was deliberating upon some mode of avoiding this horrible fate, he perceived his ideas were becoming obscure and confused, and that the moment was drawing nigh, when he would only have sufficient consciousness left to despair. He seized the bell and rung it with violence. Griso who was on the alert, immediately appeared. He stopped at a certain distance from the bed, looked attentively at his master, and became certain of what the evening before he had only conjectured.

"Griso!" said Don Rodrigo, raising himself up in the bed with difficulty "thou hast always been my confident."

"Yes, sir."

"I have always been kind to thee."

"It is your goodness."

"I can trust thee—!"

"Oh, the devil!"

"I am sick, Griso."

"I was aware of it."

"If I get well, I will be kinder to thee than I have ever been."

Griso said not a word, but waited to see in what all this preamble would end.

"I cannot trust any body but thee," Don Rodrigo continued, "do me a favor, Griso."

"Command me," he replied, answered in his usual manner, to this unwonted language.

"Dost thou know where the surgeon Chiodo lives?"

"I know very well."

"He is a safe man, who, if he is well paid, will keep his patients in secret. Go and seek him; tell him I will give him four, six crowns for every visit, and more, if he asks more; and that he must come here immediately: and do the message well, that no one may know of it."

"Very well thought of," said Griso, "I will go and return."

"Hear, Griso, give me a little water first, I am parched, and cannot stand it."

"No, signor," said Griso, "nothing without consulting the doctor. These are capricious complaints, and there is no time to lose. Be quiet, I will be here in the twinkling of an eye with Chiodo."

Having said this, he went out, shutting the door after him.

Don Rodrigo having laid down again, accompanied him in his imagination to the house of Chiodo, counted his steps, and calculated the time. Every now and then he turned to look at his left side, but turned away his face in dread. After some time, he raised his ears on the alert, to discover whether the surgeon was coming, and the effort suspended partly his sense of the evil, and kept his thoughts in some order. All at once he heard a distant noise, which seemed to him not to proceed from the street, but from the inside of the house. He listened more anxiously, it became more distinct, more continuous, together with the sound of feet. A horrible suspicion now crossed his mind. He raised himself in the bed, and listened with still more attention, and heard a dull noise in the adjoining room, as of a weight that had been carefully placed on the floor: he put his feet out of the bed to raise himself, kept his eye on the door, when it opened, and two dirty worn out red dresses, with a couple of excommunicated faces, two monatti in fact came forward and presented themselves; he perceived too in part the visage of Griso, who, hid behind a doorstead partly closed, was playing the spy.

"Ah, infamous traitor!—away scoundrels! Biondino! Carlotto! help, I am assassinated," screamed out Don Rodrigo, and thrusting his hand under the pillow to find a pistol, grasps and brings it out: but at his first cry, the monatti flew to the bed, the quickest threw himself upon him, ere he could do any thing, snatched the pistol from his hand, threw it at a distance, turned him on his side and kept him down, crying, with a grin, between rage and scorn, "Ah, you rogue! what! against the monatti! against the ministers of the tribunal! against the men who do the work of mercy!"

"Hold him fast, till we take him away," said his companion, going towards the strong chest. Griso now entered, and began to help him to force the lock.

"Scoundrel!" howled out Don Rodrigo, looking at him from under the man who held him down, and disentangling himself from his nervous arms. "Let me kill that villain," said he to the monatti, "and then do with me whatever you like." Then he began to call aloud upon his other servants, but all in vain; the abominable Griso had sent them all to a distance, with feigned orders from his master, before he had gone to the monatti to propose this undertaking, and to divide the spoils with them.

"Be quiet, be quiet," said the man who held him pinned down to the bed, to the wretched Don Rodrigo; and then turning his face to the two who were plundering the chest, called out, "do it like honest fellows now!"

"Thou! thou!" groaned out Don Rodrigo to Griso, whom he saw busy in breaking

the chest, and taking out money and other things to be divided. "Thou! after—! Devil from hell! But I can recover! I can recover!" Griso did not utter a syllable; neither, as far as he could help it, did he turn his head in the direction whence the words came.

"Hold him fast!" said the other monatti, "he is a madman."

The miserable wretch in fact became so. After a last and more violent effort to struggle and call out, he fell all at once, resistless and stupified. He looked on however like one enchanted, and now and then gave a shake of the head, and sent forth a groan.

The monatti took him, one by the feet the other by the shoulders, and went and placed him on a hand litter they had deposited in the other room, then one of them returned for the booty, and having lifted up their miserable weight, they carried him off.

Griso remained behind to select in haste whatever he thought would suit him, he made a bundle of his spoils, and left the house. He had been careful enough not to touch the monatti, not to let himself be touched by them, but in his hurry towards the last, in looking what he could pick up, he had lifted up his master's clothes near the bed, and shook them; without thinking of any thing else, to see if there was any money in them. He was reminded of this the following day, for whilst he was enjoying himself at a tavern, a sudden chill seized him, a cloud came over his eyes, his strength failed him and he fell. Abandoned by his companions, he fell into the hands of the monatti, who having pillaged him of whatever he had about him that was worth having, threw him upon a car, upon which he expired before he reached the lazaretto, where his master had been carried.

Leaving him in this abode of woes, we must now go in search of another, whose story would never have been mixed up with his, if he had not accomplished it by forced marches; indeed it may be asserted as most certain, that without that there would have been no story about either one or the other of them. I speak now of Renzo, whom we left at the new filature, under the name of Antonio Rivolta.

He had been there five or six months, saving the truth; after which, hostilities having broke out between the Venetian republic and the King of Spain, and all apprehension having ceased of any interference by bad officers from the Venetian government, Bartolo had made some haste to go and take him away, and place him about himself again, because he had an affection for him, and because Renzo, being naturally intelligent, and skillful in his vocation, was, in a great manufactory useful to the factotum; without any fear of his ever aspiring to become one himself, for he did not know how to use a pen. As this reason also counted for something in the affair, we have thought best to mention it. Perhaps you would prefer an ideal Bartolo, if so, create one for yourself. So the fact was.

Renzo continued afterwards to work under him. More than once, and especially after receiving some of those blessed letters from Agnes, the inclination had got into his head to enlist for a soldier, and finish all his troubles that way, and opportunities were not wanting, for precisely at that moment, the republic was frequently under the necessity of increasing its troops. The temptation had sometimes been so much the stronger for Renzo, as the invasion of Milan had been talked of, and it naturally appeared to him to be a very fine thing, to return home in the character of a conqueror, see Lucia again, and have an explanation with her. But Bartolo in a judicious way had always been able to divert him from that resolution.

"If they have to go there," he would say, "they can go without thee, and thou canst go afterwards at thy own convenience: if they come back with their heads broke, wont it be better to be out of the scrape? There will be no want of desperate fellows to take that course, and before they do take that road—! For me I am a heretic in this affair, they make a great noise about it, but—the state of Milan is not a mouthful to swallow so easily. It's Spain they will have to do with, my dear son; and thou knowest what Spain is, dost thou not? Saint Mark is strong enough at home, but it will take something else for that. Have patience: art thou not well off here? I know what thou wouldst tell me, but if it is destined there above that the thing is to take place, it will be more sure to do so, if thou dost not commit any follies. Some saint will help thee. Trust me it is no trade for thee. Dost it seem to thee right to leave off winding silk, just to go and kill people? What wouldst thou do amongst such a set? It requires men made on purpose."

At other times Renzo resolved to go secretly, disguised, and under a false name. But Bartolo also succeeded in dissuading him from this with reasons easily imagined.

The plague having broke out in the Milanese territory, and exactly, as we have said, where it joins that of Bergamo, it was not long before it was felt there, and—don't be alarmed, I am not going to inflict the history of that likewise upon you; he who wants to know it, can find it, written by public authority by one Lorenzo Ghirardelli, a rare book but unknown, although it contains perhaps more particulars than all the other descriptions of pestilences; upon so many things does the reputation of books depend! What I wished to say, was, that Renzo also took the plague, and cured himself; that is, he did nothing at all; nor was he brought to death's door, for his good constitution got the better of the disease, and in a few days he was out of danger. With the return of health, his mind awoke again, and more keenly, to the cares and anxieties of life, hopes, desires, remembrances, plans; that is to say, he thought more than ever of Lucia. What had become of her, at such a time, when to live

was an exception from the common fate? And at such a short distance, to know nothing about her—and to remain in such uncertainty, heaven knows how long! Then again when this doubt was dispelled, when all danger was over, and he should find out she was alive, there was always that other obstacle, that dark affair of the vow she had made. I will go, I will go, and have it all cleared up at once—he said to himself, and this he determined before he had strength enough to walk about. If she only is alive! ah, if she but lives! I will find her out, and hear from her own lips what sort of an affair this promise is, I'll show her that it can't hold, and I'll take her away; her, and that poor Agnes, if she is alive! she always wished me well, and I am sure she does so still. As to arresting me, those who are alive have something else to think of now. They go about in safety, even here, those who have committed—Is there security for nobody but scoundrels? And at Milan, all agree the confusion is much greater, therefore if I let such a favorable opportunity escape. (The plague! see what a strange use we make of words some times, that blessed instinct of referring and making every thing subordinate to ourselves.) I shall never have such another.

How delightful is hope, my dear Renzo!

Scarce could he drag himself about, than he went in search of Bartolo, who up to that time had been fortunate enough to escape the plague, and kept himself secluded. He did not go into the house, but calling out to him, he came to the window.

"Ah! ah!" said Bartolo, "Thou hast got out of it, eh! It's well for thee!"

"I am rather weak, as thou see'st, but as to danger, I am out of that."

"Faith, I wish I was as well off as thou art. Formerly when a man could say, 'I am very well,' it seemed to comprehend every thing, but now it is not worth much. Give me the man that can say, 'I am better,' that to be sure means a great deal."

Renzo having said a few encouraging words to his cousin, communicated to him his resolution.

"Well, go this time, and may heaven bless thee," he answered. "Try to keep out of the hands of justice, as I will try to keep out of the way of the contagion, and if God pleases to prosper us both, we shall see each other again."

"Oh, I shall certainly come back, if I could only come back with somebody else. Well, I must hope."

"Come back accompanied, if God pleases, we will all work together, and be good company to each other. If only thou findest me here again, and this devilish pestilence was over!"

"We shall see each other again; we shall meet again, we shall meet again!"

"Well, I repeat, God grant it so."

For some days, Renzo exercised himself to get his strength back again; and scarce did he think he could bear the journey, than he prepared for his departure. He fastened a girdle beneath his clothes containing the fifty crowns, which he had never touched, and which he had never told any one about, not even Bartolo; took a little money that he had laid by from day to day, as he lived very frugally; put a bundle of clothes under his arm; and with the recommendation of service his second master had given him, under the name of Antonio Rivolta, in his pocket, and a knife in the girdle of his waist, which was the least thing a decent man could wear in those times, he started, about the last of August, three days after Don Rodrigo had been carried to the lazaretto. He took the road to Lecco, desirous, before he ventured himself to Milan, to pass by his own village, where he hoped to find Agnes, and to begin by learning from her some of those matters he was in such distress about.

The few persons who had recovered from the plague, were, in the midst of the population, truly a privileged class. A great part of the survivors were languishing and dying, and those who had hitherto escaped the contagion lived in continual apprehension; they went cautiously about, with great circumspection, with measured steps, clouded aspects, and with haste and hesitation at the same time, for every thing they met might inflict a mortal wound on them. Those on the other hand, who had recovered, feeling almost quite secure, (since it was rather a prodigious than a rare thing to have had the plague twice,) went about amidst the pestilence freely and boldly, as the knights of a particular period of the middle ages, cased in armor wherever iron could be put, and riding upon palfreys secured in like manner, as far as it was possible; thus they went wandering about, (hence the glorious denomination of knights errant,) wherever chance led them, amongst a poor rabble on foot of burghers and peasants, who had nothing but rags on their backs to turn and deaden their blows.—A beautiful, sage, and useful occupation, worthy of cutting the first figure in a treatise of political economy.

With such confidence, tempted however by some solicitude, by the frequent sad spectacles he saw, and by the incessant thought of the general calamity, Renzo went towards his house, beneath a fine sky, and through a charming country, and meeting after distances of a melancholy solitude, some wandering shade rather than a living person, or dead bodies that were carrying to the ditch, without funeral honors or dirges. About midday he stopped in a grove, to eat a little bread and a mouthful of meat which he had brought with him.—Fruit he had abundantly at his disposition all along the road, much more than he wanted; figs, peaches, plums, and apples in profusion. He had nothing to do but to go into an orchard, and gather them from the boughs, or pick up the ripest which had fallen to the ground, for the year had been extraordinarily abundant in all kinds of apples, and scarce any one attended to gathering them; the grapes were hid be-

neath a covering of vine leaves, and were left in the power of any one who chose to take them.

Towards vespers he discovered his own village. At the sight of it, however he might have been prepared, he felt his heart begin to beat. A multitude of sorrowful recollections, and painful presentiments, rushed upon him; he seemed to have in his ears those ominous strokes of the bell, which had pursued him, as it were, when he fled the country; whilst at the same moment, the silence of death was actually reigning around. He experienced a still greater agitation when he reached the sacristy, and expected he should feel still more so at the term of his walk; for the place where he had proposed to stop, was that house which he had been accustomed to call Lucia's house. Now, he could only call it Agnes' house, and the only favor that he asked of Heaven, was to find her there alive and in health. There he intended to ask for lodgings, conjecturing too well, that his own was no longer a fit residence for any thing but rats and pole cats.

To reach it, then, without passing through the village, he took a path that led behind, the same which he had once trod in such excellent company, that remarkable night when they intended to surprise the curate. About midday, Renzo's vineyard laid on one side of the road, and his house on the other, so that in passing he could enter both of them a moment to see how his own affairs stood.

As he was walking, he looked before him, anxious and even apprehensive about seeing any one, and after a few paces, he perceived a man in his shirt, seated on the ground, leaning with his back against a hedge of jessamines, in the attitude of an idiot; this circumstance, added to some resemblance in the face, called up to his recollection that poor stupid blockhead Gervaso, who accompanied him as a second witness on that unlucky disposition. But on drawing nigher, he perceived that instead of him it was that sharp fellow Tonio, who had managed the affair. The pestilence, which had taken away from him both his vigor of mind and body, had brought out in his features and in all his movements, a slightly concealed resemblance that he bore to his silly brother.

"Oh, Tonio," said Renzo to him, stopping, "is it thou?"

Tonio raised his eyes up to his face, without moving his head.

"Tonio, dost thou not know me?"

"Whose turn it is, it is their turn!" answered Tonio, remaining with his mouth open.

"Oh, thou hast it then? poor Tonio, and thou dost not know me again?"

"Whose turn it is, it is their turn!" he replied, with a silly smile. Renzo seeing nothing was to be learnt from him went on still more sorrowful. When something black, turning a corner, advanced towards him, which he recognized to be Don Abbondio. He was walking slowly, and carrying his stick as though he partly relied upon it to carry him: as he drew near, it was evident by his squalid and meagre visage, and emaciated figure, that he had had to encounter the storm. He looked at Renzo, it seemed to him as if it was so and was not so; he perceived something foreign in his dress, but it was precisely the dress of a Bergamascan.

It is him beyond a doubt!—said he to himself, and raised his hands to heaven with a movement of discontented surprise, holding up, in his right hand, his stick in the air, his poor thin arms hardly appearing in the sleeves which they once filled so well. Renzo hastened to meet him, and make him a bow, for although they had parted in a way you have not forgot, still he was his curate.

"Are you here?" Don Abbondio exclaimed.

"I am here, as your worship sees. Does your worship know any thing of Lucia?"

"What should I know about her? nothing is known of her. She is at Milan, that is if she is yet in this world. But you—"

"And Agnes, is she alive?"

"For ought I know; but how should I know? she is not here. But—"

"Where is she?"

"She is gone to stay in Valsassina, with her relations there, at Pasturo, you know who very well. They say the plague is not as bad there as it is here. But you, I say—"

"Well, I am quite sorry for that. And father Christopher—?"

"He went away some time ago. But—"

"I knew that, they wrote me word. I ask if ever he came back to these parts."

"Pugh! We've heard nothing more about him. But you—"

"I am very sorry for that too."

"But you, I say, what are you come here for, in these parts, for the love of Heaven?—Don't you know that such a trifle as that outlawry.

"I don't mind that. They have something else to think about. I wanted to come here once more to look after my affairs. So it is not known exactly—?"

"What do you want to do or see here?—there's nobody left, there's nothing at all left. And I repeat, that with the trifling matter of that outlawry hanging over you, to come here, right into the village, into the wolf's mouth, is there any sense in that? Do as an old man tells you who has more than yourself, and who gives you advice for the love he bears you. Fasten your shoes well, and before any one sees you, return to whence you came from; and if any one has seen you, make the greater hurry in getting back. Is this an air for you to breathe, do you think, this? Don't you know that they have been here to look after you, and that they have ferreted every where and turned things topsy turvy?

"I know it too well, the villains!"

"But then—"

"But if I tell you that I don't think of staying. And he, is he alive yet? is he here in the neighborhood?"

"I tell you there is nobody here, I tell you, you must not think of any thing that is here, I tell you that—"

"I ask if he is here, he?"

"Oh, blessed Heaven? Be prudent. Is it possible that you have still got all that fire up, after so many things have happened?"

"Is he here, or is he not here?"

"He is not here, I tell you. But the plague is here my son, the plague! Who is there goes about so, in such times as these?"

"If there was nothing but the plague in this world—I speak for myself. I have had it, and am free now."

"But then, but then, are not these warnings? When a man has escaped a danger of this kind, it seems to me he ought to thank Heaven, and—"

"I do thank it sincerely."

"And should not run himself into others, I say. Do as I do."

"Your worship has had it too, Signor curate, if I am not mistaken."

"If I have had it! A most infamous and perfidious disorder it has been to me. It's a miracle that I am alive. I need say no more than that it has left me in such horrible trim as you see me. And now, I was just wanting a little quiet, to put me in some tone: I was beginning to get a little better—and—what in the name of Heaven are you come here for? Turn back—"

"Your reverence is so full of this turning back. Why should I turn back when I have so many reasons for staying? What am I come here for, what am I come here for? I am come home to my own house."

"Your house—"

"Tell me, are many of the people dead here!"

"Oh, dear; oh, dear!" exclaimed Don Abbondio; and beginning with Perpetua, he enumerated a great many individuals, and entire families. Renzo was too well prepared for news of this kind, but when he heard the names of so many acquaintances, friends, and connections, (he had lost his parents some years before) he was very much touched, and hanging down his head, he exclaimed every now and then, poor fellow! poor woman! poor people!"

"You see how it is!" continued Don Abbondio, "and it is not over yet. If those who are left are not prudent for once, and dont get rid of all their notions, there is nothing but the end of the world that will bring them to reason."

Dont doubt it; indeed I have no intention of remaining here."

"Ah! Heaven be praised, it only has brought you to your senses. I enter into your idea, you have made up your mind to go back."

"Your worship need not trouble yourself about that."

"Why, you are certainly not going to propose any thing worse to me, are you?

"Don't trouble yourself about it I say; that's my business: I am more than seven years old at any rate. I hope your worship will not tell any one that you have seen me. Your worship is a pastor, I am one of your flock, and you wont betray me."

"I understand," said Don Abbondio, sighing in an angry manner.

"I understand. You want to ruin yourself, and to ruin me too. You are not satisfied with what you have gone through yourself, and you are not satisfied with what I have gone through. I understand, I understand." And, continuing to murmur in his teeth these last words, he went on his way.

Renzo remained there sad and discontented, thinking where he should go to lodge. In the fatal list that Don Abbondio had given him of those who had died, there was a family of country people all carried off except a young man, nearly of Renzo's age, and his companion from infancy: the house was out of the village, a very short distance. There he determined to go to ask for quarters.

He had approached near to his own vineyard, sufficiently to form some idea of the real state in which it was. A young shoot, the branch of a tree which he had left, did not appear above the wall, and if any thing did appear, it had all grown during his absence. He went to the open edge of it, (for there was not a vestige left of rails) and cast a look around. Poor vineyard! For two winters running the country people had gone to provide themselves with wood there, "at the poor young fellows place," as they said. Vines, mulberry trees, fruit trees of every kind, all had been violently pulled up, or cut off by the roots. Some appearances however of the ancient cultivation were to be seen; young cuttings in interrupted lines, but which marked the traces of the disordered rows: here and there were stocks and shoots of mulberries, figs, peaches, cherries, and plums, but all choked and suffocated in the midst of a new, various and thick growth, sprung up and growing without the aid of man. An immense crowd of nettles, ferns, cockles, dog-grass, docks, wild oats, sorrel, and all sort of wild plants of that kind, which country people in all parts of the world, have formed one extensive class of, called bad weeds. It was a confusion of stems, all trying to over-reach one another, or to get the better of one another creeping on the ground—a set of things trying to oust each other of their places in every possible way: a mixture of leaves, flowers, fruits, of a hundred colors, a hundred forms, a hundred sizes; ears of grain, clusters of flowers, with small heads, white, red, yellow, blue. Amidst the maze some appeared more distinctly, and with more attraction, yet not of more value, at least the greater part of them. The Turkish grape was above them all, with its spreading ruddy branches and its splendid leaves of a greenish brown, sometimes edged with purple at the end; its curved branches too, formed of berries open below, above them small purple flowers, then green ones, and at the top

whitish ones. The bearded yew with its broad woolly leaves on the ground and its stem in the air, furnished with long scattered spikes, stellated with bright yellow flowers: thistles with their hairy stems and branches, with tufts of white or purple flowers crowning them, except when they burst open, and their light and silvery down was borne away by the air. Here a quantity of birdweed, creeping and interlacing with the new shoots of a mulberry plant, had covered them over with its pendulous leaves, pointing to the ground, and suspending from the top of them its white and tender little bells: there a briony with its vermilion berries, had twisted itself around the young shoots of a vine, the which, in vain seeking for a stronger support, had in turn clung to the briony with its tendrils, and mixing their weak stems and their leaves, so little dissimilar, mutually drew themselves downwards, as it frequently occurs to the weak to rely upon each other for support. The bramble was every where; it went from one plant to another, crept out and down again, curled its branches or extended them, as necessity required, and advancing beyond the limit of the vineyard itself, seemed to be there for the purpose of disputing the entrance with the proprietor himself.

But he had no wish to enter into such a vineyard, and perhaps did not remain as long to look at it, as we have taken to make this little sketch. He moved away from it; at a short distance was his house, he passed through the garden, trampling on hundreds of the new comers, with which it was peopled, and covered just like the vineyard. He entered one of the two small rooms on the ground floor; at the noise of his footsteps, at his presence, a confused rushing and tumultuous hurrying away of rats, a plunging into the rubbish and dirt with which the floor was covered, and which had once been the bed of the landzknechts, was heard. He raised his eyes around to the crumbled, dirty and smoked walls; he looked at the ceiling which was one mass of cobwebs. There was nothing else to be seen. He moved away from here also, putting his hands in his hair, passed through the garden, and regained the path he had trod a few moments before. After a few paces, he took another path to the left, which led to the fields, and without seeing or hearing a living soul, he approached the house where he intended to seek hospitality. It was now evening. His friend was seated at the door, upon a wooden bench, with his arms crossed on his breast, his eyes directed to Heaven, like a man stupified by his misfortunes, and made half savage by solitude. Hearing a footstep, he turned to see who was coming, and mistaking him in the twilight, between the boughs and the leaves, he cried aloud, standing erect, and raising both his hands, "Is there no one but myself? Have I not done enough yesterday? Leave me to myself a little, even this will be an act of mercy."

Renzo, not knowing what this meant, answered him, calling him by his name.

"Renzo?" said he, at the very same moment.

"The very same," said Renzo, and they hastened to meet each other.

"Is it indeed thyself?" said his friend when they got together.

"Oh, how glad I am to see thee! Who would have thought of it? I thought thou wert paolin of the dead, who is always coming plaguing me to help to bury people. Dost thou know that I am left alone? quite alone! just like a hermit!"

"I know it too well," said Renzo. And thus exchanging and mingling together welcomes, questions, and answers, they entered the house together. There, without interrupting their conversation, his friend stirring about, to do some little honor to Renzo, unprovided as he was at such a time. He put some water on the fire, and began to make some polenta, but gave the stick to Renzo, to stir it with, and went away, saying "I am quite alone, I have nobody to help me, but—"

He returned with a little pail of milk, some salt meat, a couple of cream cheeses, some figs and peaches, and every thing being ready, he turned the polenta out upon the dish, and they sat down to the table, thanking each other by turns, one for the visit, the other for the reception given him. And after an absence of near two years, they soon found out they were more attached to each other than they had ever been, when they saw each other every day: for, as the manuscript says, things of that nature had happened to both of them which made them sensible what a balm to the mind benevolence is, as well that which is felt, as that which is experienced in another.

Certainly, nobody could supply to Renzo the place of Agnes, not only on account of that old and especial affection he bore her, but also because amongst the many things he wanted information about, there was one of which she alone possessed the key. He remained a moment hesitating between two plans, one to go and seek her, since she was at so short a distance; but considering that she would know nothing of Lucia's health, he adhered to his first intention to ascertain that point, to make the great attempt, and then convey the news to her mother. From his friend, however, he learned a great many things he was ignorant of, and got several matters cleared up of which he had imperfect information, respecting Lucia's affairs, and the persecutions he had undergone; and how Don Rodrigo had left the country with his tail between his legs, and had been no more seen in those parts, together with the whole mistification of that affair. He learnt also, (and it was a piece of information of no small importance to him,) how to pronounce correctly the name of Don Ferrante, which Agnes had communicated to him by her amanuensis, but heaven knows how it had been written, and the Bergamasc interpreter had read it to him in such a way, had made such a strange word of it, that if he had gone to Milan to get

information of such a family, he would probably not have found any one able to guess who he was talking about. And yet it was the only thread he had to lead him in his search after Lucia. As to justice, he felt sufficiently assured that the danger was too remote to give himself any trouble about. The Podesta was dead of the plague, and no one could tell when another would be sent in his place; the birri for the greater part, were gone too, and those who were left had something else to do than to trouble themselves about old matters.

He related his own adventures to his friend, who told him in return a hundred stories, of the passage of the army, of the plague, of the anointers, of the prodigies that had taken place. "These are all frightful things," said the young man accompanying Renzo to a small chamber which the contagion had emptied of its inhabitants, "things one never could have thought of seeing, things that would prevent one's ever being cheerful again, yet it relieves one to tell them to a friend."

By daylight both of them were down stairs, Renzo ready for his journey, with his girdle hid under his jacket, and his knife in his waist, and as to the rest bright and active. He left his bundle in the care of his friend. "If every thing turns out well," he said, "if I find her alive, if—enough—then I shall come back here; I will go to Pasturo, to give the happy news to the good Agnes, and then, and then.—But if, unfortunately—unfortunately it is not God's pleasure—then, I know not what I shall do, I know not where I shall go, certainly I shall never return here." Saying this, he stood erect on the path that led to the fields, and raising his head, with a look of mingled tenderness and grief, he looked at the sunrise of his native place, which he had not seen for so long a period. His friend comforted him with hopes, made him take some provisions with him to last the day, accompanied him a part of the way, and let him go with repeated auguries of good luck.

Renzo began his walk moderately, desirous only of getting near to Milan that day, that he might enter it early the next morning, and begin his search. He met with no accident, nor did he meet with any thing that particularly attracted his attention beyond the usual melancholy and wretched spectacle he was accustomed to. As he had done the preceding day, he stopped at the proper time, in a grove to refresh himself, and to rest himself. Passing by Monza, before an open shop where bread was exposed for sale, he asked for a couple of loaves, that in any event, he might not be unprovided. The man who kept the shop, desiring him not to come in, put out a stick with a small dish at the end of it, containing water and vinegar, telling him to let the price of the bread drop into it, as was done: then with a pair of tongs, he handed him one after the other, the two loaves, one of which Renzo put in each pocket.

Towards evening he reached Greco, without knowing the name of the place, but with some recollection of the places that he had preserved since his last journey, and some calculation of the distance he had made from Monza, he judged that he had got nigh enough to the city: he therefore left the high road, in order to find some cascinotto in the fields where he could pass the night, not being disposed to get himself into any trouble with inns at all. He found something better than he looked for; seeing a gap in a hedge that went round a barn yard, he entered it at once. No one was there. On one side he saw an extensive loft with a quantity of hay in it, and a wooden ladder leaning against it. Again he looked around him, then mounted the ladder at all hazards, prepared himself for passing the night there, and soon dropped asleep, to awaken only in the morning. Having awoke, he crept gently to the edge of his capacious bed, put his head out, and seeing no one, got down as he got up, went out as he entered, took the byways, taking the dome of the cathedral for his polar star, and, after a short walk, came to the walls of Milan, betwixt the oriental gate, and Porta Nuova, and very near to this last.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

In regard to entering the city, Renzo had heard in general that the order was very severe to let no one in without a bill of health, but that in reality it was very easy to get in, by any one who knew how to manage a little, and to take the proper time. So it was, and without discussing the general causes, why, at such a time, every order was indifferently executed, and the particular causes which rendered their rigorous execution so difficult, Milan was brought to such a situation as not to be able to perceive the necessity of its safety being looked after, or by whom; so that whoever should enter would seem more indifferent about his own health, than dangerous to that of the citizens.

With this information, Renzo's plan was to try to enter at the first gate he should come to, and if he found any difficulty, to go round until he found another more easy of access.—Heaven knows how many gates he thought Milan must necessarily have.

Having reached the walls, he stopped to look about him, like a person, who not knowing which is the best course to take, seems to be expecting some indication or other from every thing. But, to the right and to the left, he discovered nothing but two pieces of road forking off in front of him, and the wall: no where was there any sign of a living person, if it was not, that from some places upon the terrace, a dense column of dark and heavy cloud was seen rising up, and spreading, and resolving itself into globular bodies, which afterwards dissipated themselves into the immovable and grey atmosphere. It was the clothes, the beds,

and other infected movables which they were burning, and such dreadful bonfires they were continually making, not there alone, but all along the walls.

The weather was close, the air heavy, the sky was covered by a thick cloud or universal fog, quite inert, which seemed to hide the sun, without promising rain; the country around was partly uncultivated, and quite burnt up, the verdure had all faded, and not a drop of dew refreshed the withered and drooping leaves. In addition to these, the solitude and silence that reigned amidst such a mass of habitations, brought a new consternation upon the inquietude of Renzo, and made his thoughts still more sad.

Having reflected a moment, he took the right hand road at hazard, going, without knowing it, towards Porta Nuova, the which, although near to it, he could not perceive, on account of a bulwark behind which it was then hid.—After a few paces, the sound of small bells began to reach his ears, at repeated intervals, and then the voice of a man. He went on, turned the angle of the bastion, and the first thing he saw, on the level before the gate, was a wooden sentry box, at the door of which, was a guard with a wearied and negligent manner, leaning on his musket. Behind it was a palisade, and further down the gate itself, that is to say, two wings of the wall, with a shed over the space, to protect the woodwork: the gate was wide open, as well as the wicket of the pales. But right before this last, was a melancholy sort of obstacle, a hand litter, placed on the ground, and two monatti placing an unfortunate creature on it to take him away. This was the head toll-gatherer, in whom a short time before the plague had broken out. Renzo stopped where he was, waiting till they had done, and they having gone, and no one appearing to close the wicket, he thought his chance was now come, and hastened on; but the guard putting on a fierce look, called out to him "hollo!" He stopped, and winking at the fellow, took out half a ducat, and showed it to him. Either he had had the plague, or that fearing it less than he liked half ducats, he made signs to Renzo to throw it to him,and seeing that it was immediately thrown at his feet, whispered, "push on quick."—Renzo did not wait for this to be repeated, he passed through the wicket, and the gate, and advanced without any one seeing him or looking after him, except that when he had gone about forty paces, he heard another "hollo!" which a toll-gatherer sent after him. Instead of turning about, he quickened his pace, and pretended not to hear him. "Hollo!" cried out the toll-gatherer again, but in a tone that indicated more anger than determination to be obeyed, and the man perceiving no attention was paid to him, shrugged up his shoulders and went in again, like a man who preferred keeping himself at a distance from passengers, to questioning them too closely about their affairs.

The street that led from the gate, ran then, as at present, straight on to the canal called Naviglio: on each side were hedges or garden walls, churches and convents, and very few houses: at the end of this street, and in the midst of the next which continued on to the canal, there was a cross standing up, called the cross of St. Eusebio. As far as Renzo could see before him, nothing was to be perceived but that cross. Having reached a cross street which divided the one he was in about the centre, and looking to the right and to the left, he perceived to the right, in the one which is called Santa Teresa, a citizen coming towards him.—Here, at last, is a christian!—said he to himself, and immediately turned into the street, proposing to speak to him. This man also looked at him, and kept examining from a distance, with a suspicious eye, the stranger who was approaching; and more particularly when he saw, that instead of going on his own way, he was coming right up to him. Renzo,when he was at a short distance, took off his hat, like a respectful mountaineer, as he was, and holding it with his left hand, he put his right into the empty crown, and went directly towards the unknown. But he, rolling his eyes, stept back a pace, and lifting a knotty stick he had, with a sharp iron at the end of it like a spike, and thrusting it towards Renzo's face, cried out, be off! be off! be off!

"Oh, oh!" cried out the youth likewise, putting his hat on, and feeling disposed, as he said afterwards, for any thing but a dispute at such a moment, turned his back upon so uncourteous a person, and went on his way, or to speak more correctly, the street into which he had now got.

The citizen likewise went on his, all in a rage, and looking behind his shoulders every now and then. As soon as he got home, he related how an anointer had come up to him, with a humble and gentle manner, and the countenance of an infamous impostor, with his box of ointment, or his paper containing powder, (he was not quite certain which of the two) in his hand, in the crown of his hat, to throw it at him, if he had not contrived to prevent him. "If he had come one step nearer to me, I would have run him right through before he would have had time to do any thing to me, the scoundrel. The misfortune was that we were in such a lone place; if we had been in the heart of the city, I would have called for some aid, and we would have given it to him. Certainly we should have found all that villanous filthy stuff in his hat. But, there, all alone, I was obliged to be satisfied with saving myself, without running the risk of bringing some misfortune on me, for a little powder is soon thrown, and these fellows are very dexterous at doing it, and then they have the devil to help them besides. He is now going all about Milan, and who knows what destruction he will create." As long as he lived, which was a good many years, every time that he talked of anointers, he repeated his own

case, and added, "those who maintain there was no such thing, don't let them come and tell me so, for it is necessary to have seen such things."

Renzo, far from imagining what a difficulty he had escaped out of, and being more moved by anger than fear, thought, as he was walking, of the strange reception he had got, and at length made some slight conjecture of the real opinion the citizen had formed of him; but the thing appeared so extravagant, that he came to the conclusion, the man must have been half crazy.—It's a bad beginning however —thought he,—my evil stars are over me here in Milan. I find no difficulty in getting into the place, but as soon as I am in, I find all sorts of vexations waiting for me. Well—with God's help—if I find—if I succeed in finding—all this will be nothing at all.

Having reached the foot of the bridge, he turned to the left, without hesitation, into the street called Strada San Marco, as being one which seemed to lead into the interior of the city. And proceeding on, he looked about to see if he could perceive some human creature, but nothing could he see save a disformed carcass in the ditch which runs between the few houses there, (for then they were very few) and the street, for some distance. Having passed the ditch, he heard some one calling out, as if to him, and turning to whence the sound came from, he perceived a short way off, at the balcony of a small house standing by itself, a poor woman with a group of children around her, who kept calling to him, and beckoning with her hand for him to approach. He went, and when he was near, "Oh, young man," said the woman, "for the love of your own dead, do me the charity to go and inform the commissary that we have been forgotten here. They have fastened up the house as a suspected one, because my poor husband is dead, they have nailed the door up, as you see, and since yesterday morning no one has brought us any thing to eat. For so many hours as I have been here, I have not been able to see one christian who would do this act of charity for me, and these poor innocents are dying of hunger."

"Of hunger!" exclaimed Renzo, and putting his hands to his pockets, and taking the two loaves out, said, "here, here, let something down from the window to take them."

"God reward you, stop a moment," said the woman, and went to look for a basket and a cord to drop it down to him with, which she did. Renzo remembered at this instant the two loaves which he had formerly found at the cross, at his entrance, and thought,—this is a restitution, and is better perhaps than if I had found the owner of them himself, for this is truly an act of mercy.

"As to the commissary you speak of, my good woman, he said, putting the loaves into the basket, I can't help you in that, for, to tell the truth, I am a stranger, and I am not at all acquainted with the town. But if I meet any humane person who can help you, and can get an opportunity of speaking to him, I will tell him."

The woman entreated him to do so, and told him the name of the street, that he might give them directions.

"And you," replied Renzo, "I believe you could do me a service, a real piece of charity, without inconveniencing yourself. Can you tell me how to find a gentleman's house, one of the great people here of Milan, the family of ——."

"I know there is such a house," said the woman, "but I do not know where it is. If you go in this direction you will find some one or other who will show you, and remember also to tell him of us."

"Dont doubt it," said Renzo, and went on.

At every step he heard a noise increase, and approach, which he had first been aware of when he stopped to talk to the woman; a noise of wheels and horses, with a sound of bells, and every now and then a cracking of whips, and shouting. He looked before, but saw nothing. Having reached the end of that crooked street, and got in front of St. Mark's Square, the thing that first arrested his attention was two posts set up, with a cord and pulleys; he saw directly, (for it was a familiar sight in those days) the abominable machine of torture. It was erected in that place, and not only in that, but in all the squares and most spacious streets, so that the deputies of every quarter, being furnished with arbitrary authority, might apply this instrument to any one who appeared deserving of punishment, to sequestered people who had left their houses, or officials who refused to execute their orders, or to any persons whatever; it was one of those immoderate and inefficacious remedies of the times, and especially of that moment, which were made such profuse use of.

Whilst Renzo was looking at it, conjecturing why it was placed there, the noise drew nigh, and round the corner of the church a man appeared who rang a small bell, he was an apparitor; behind him two horses stretching out their necks, and straining their limbs, were advancing with difficulty, and dragging a car full of dead bodies, after this came another, and then another, and then another, with monatti at the horses sides, urging them on with blows and oaths. The bodies were naked for the greater part, some badly wrapped up in dirty rags, heaped up, and folded together like a knot of serpents which slowly disengage themselves with the warmth of spring: for at every stop, at every shock, those melancholy heaps were observed to tremble and separate in a disgusting manner, heads were protruded downwards, virgin tresses thrown the wrong way, arms were liberated and knocking against the wheels, revealing to the horror struck eye how so sad a funeral spectacle could become still more wretched and offensive.

The youth stopped at the corner of the square, near the barrier of the canal, and prayed meanwhile for the unknown dead. A dreadful

thought shot through his mind; perhaps there, there with the rest, there beneath—oh, Lord God! let it not be true! suffer me not to think of it!

The funeral train disappeared, and he too moved, crossing the square, following the street on the left along the canal, without any other reason for doing so, except that the cars had gone the opposite way. Having gone the short distance betwixt the flank of the church and the canal, he saw on his right the Marcellino bridge, he crossed it, and so by that narrow pass got into the Borgo Nuovo. Whilst he was looking ahead, always with a view to discover some one of whom he might make some inquiries, he saw at the other end of the street a priest in his doublet, standing with a stick in his hand near a door which was ajar, his head inclining downwards, and his ear at the open space; soon afterwards he saw the priest raise his hand in the act of giving a benediction. He concluded, what was the fact, that he had been confessing some one, and said to himself,—this is my man. If a priest exercising the functions of a priest has not got a little charity, a little affability and kindness, I must say there is none to be found in the world.

In the meantime the priest, having left the door, advanced towards Renzo, walking very carefully, in the middle of the street. Renzo when he was within four or five paces of him, took his hat off, and intimated that he wished to speak to him, stopping at the same time, in such a way as to show him that he did not wish to act indiscreetly by coming too near him. He stopped likewise as though he was willing to listen, putting his stick, however, to the ground before him, as if it was to serve as a bulwark for him.

Renzo made his inquiries, which the priest answered, not only telling him the name of the street where the house was situated, but giving him also, as he saw the poor young fellow stood in need of them, some directions, describing to him by ever so many rights and lefts, crosses and churches, the other six or eight streets he had to pass before he got there.

"God keep you well, in these times, and always," said Renzo; and as the priest was leaving him, "there is another act of charity," he added; and then communicated to him the fact of the poor woman who had been forgotten. The worthy priest thanked him for having furnished him with an occasion for sending such necessary succors, and, saying he would inform the proper authority, went on.

Renzo, having made his bow, went also on his way, repeating to himself the directions he had received, that he might be obliged as little as possible to ask any more questions. It would be difficult for any one to imagine what a painful operation this was to him, not simply on account of the intricacy of the affair, but of a new agitation that had sprung up in his mind. The very name of the street, and the course which had been described to him to get there, threw his whole mind into confusion. It was the information he had wished and had sought, without which he could do nothing; nor had he been told any thing which could induce him to entertain any evil omens, or even a suspicion of misfortune. But what was the cause? It was the more distant idea of a period at hand, when a great doubt would be resolved, when he might hear it said,—she is alive,—or hear it said,—she is dead. The feeling had become so strong with him, that at that very moment he would have preferred to have remained altogether in the dark about every thing, and to be at the very beginning of his journey, when he was just touching the very term of it. He however rallied himself—if—said he, I begin to act like a child now, what will it all come to? Thus somewhat reassured, he pursued his way, advancing into the city.

What a city! and what a moment to think of its condition the preceding year, during the famine!

Renzo had precisely to pass by one of the quarters of the city which had been most despoiled and desolated: the cross streets which were called the Carrobbio of Porta Nuova, (there was a cross then at the head of the Corso, and in front of it, near the place where now San Francisco di Paola stands, an old church called St. Anastasia.) In that quarter such had been the rage of the contagion, and the infection from the dead bodies, that the few persons who had survived, had been obliged to evacuate it: so that while the eye of the passenger was struck by the appearance of solitude and abandonment, more than one sense was too distressingly offended by the relics of the recent habitations. Renzo quickened his steps, encouraging himself with the thought that the house he was seeking could not be near this quarter, and hoping, that ere he should arrive there, he should find the scene, at least in a great measure changed: and in fact, at no great distance he came to what might be called a city of the living, but still what a city! and what living! All the street doors, from suspicion and terror, shut up, except those which were wide open because they were uninhabited or had been invaded: others nailed up and sealed without, on account of persons dead or sick within of the plague: some were marked with the figure of a cross made with coal, as a sign to the monatti, that some dead bodies were there to be removed: things were trusted to chance more than system, depending upon whether a commissary of the tribunal of health or any other official had gone to this or to that place, whether he had executed his orders, or wanted to extort something. Rags, purulent bandages, infectious bed clothes, garments, or sheets were lying every where, as they had been thrown out of the windows, sometimes dead bodies, or those of persons who had fallen exhausted in the street, and left there till a car should pass by and take them, or corpses which had slipped from the cars themselves, or which had been pitched from the windows: so much had the duration and rage of the disorder ren-

dered men savage, and weaned them from every pious care, and social respect! The bustle of the shops, the noise of carriages, the cries of sellers, the talking of passengers having every where ceased, it was now an extremely rare thing that that silence of death should be interrupted by any thing but the rumbling of the funeral cars, the wailings of the sick, the complaints of the infected, the howlings of the frantic, and the vociferations of the monatti. At the dawn, at midday, and at evening, a bell from the dome of the cathedral gave notice to recite certain prayers that had been directed by the archbishop: the bells of the other churches responded to the stroke, and at that hour the people drew to the windows of their houses to pray together: there a whispering of voices and of groans might be heard, uttering forth a wretchedness mixed up, nevertheless, with some comfort.

Two thirds of the citizens being at this time perhaps dead, and a great portion of the remainder being in a feeble and languishing state, and the concourse of people to the city from without the walls, being reduced almost to nothing, it was difficult, in a long circuit, to meet by chance, any one in whose person something extraordinary was not to be observed, and sufficient of itself to announce a fatal change in things. Men of the first distinction, were seen without cloaks, a most essential part, at that period, of polite dress; priests without their cassocks, friars without their cowls; every sort of dress in fact had been laid aside, the skirts of which could come in contact with any thing, or give (what was more dreaded than any thing) facility to the anointers; and besides going about girded up and as tight as possible, every one was negligent and slovenly in his person: those who wore beards permitted them to grow inordinately long, and those who were accustomed to shave permitted them to grow: neither did they take any care of their hair, letting it grow at random, not only on account of the indifference which grows out of a long continued consternation, but because the barbers had become suspected, from the moment that one of them, Giangiacomo Mora, had been arrested and condemned, as a great anointer. A name that, for a long time afterwards, preserved an infamous celebrity in the city, whilst in truth it merited a more extensive and perpetual praise for goodness.

The greater part held in one hand a club, and some a pistol, as a menacing warning to whoever wanted to approach too near, and in the other an odorous pastil, or a metallic or wooden ball pierced with holes, and containing sponges dipped in medicated acids, putting them constantly to their noses, or keeping them there always. Some carried, suspended from their necks, a vial containing quick silver, persuaded that it possessed the virtue of absorbing pestilential effluvia, and taking care to renew it from time to time. The gentlemen not only went about without their usual attendants, but were seen with a basket on their arms going to provide themselves with the necessaries of life. Friends, when indeed two living ones met in the streets, saluted each other from a distance, with silent and hasty motions.—Every one, in walking, had enough to do to get out of the way of the disgusting and deadly rubbish spread on the ground, which sometimes entirely encumbered it. All sought to keep the middle of the street, afraid of some filth, or something more fatally heavy that might be thrown out of the window, afraid too of the poisonous powders that were said to be frequently thrown from them upon the passengers, and of the walls, lest they might be anointed. Thus ignorance, secure and unprofitably cautious, now added misery to misery, and substituted false terrors for the salutary and reasonable precautions it had taken in the beginning.

Such was the least deformed, and least distressing spectacle that was exhibited by those who were well and at ease; for after so many images of misery, and reflecting upon that still more distressing picture we have yet to describe, we will not stop now to speak of the miserable and loathsome objects who dragged themselves about, or who were lying in the streets, beggars—children and women. They were such, that the spectator might find a desperate comfort in what would appear to posterity as the consummation of misfortune, in the reflection of how small a number the living were reduced to.

In the midst of this desolation Renzo had finished a great part of his course, when at some distance from a street into which he had to turn, he heard a confused and various noise, amidst which he distinguished the wonted horrible ringing.

At the entrance of the street, which was somewhat broad, he saw in the centre of it four cars standing still; and as in a corn market people are seen going and coming, loading and throwing off sacks, such was the press in this place. Monatti running into the houses, monatti coming out of them, with a load on their backs, and putting it on one or the other of the cars: some with red dresses on, others without that distinction, many with a still more odious one, plumes and caps of various colors, worn by those wretches, as tokens of festivity, in the midst of so much public mourning.—Now and then a lugubrious voice was heard from a window, "here, monatti!" and with a still more horrible tone, a sharp voice would be heard issuing from that fearful confusion, "by and by." Or else complaints from those near, urging them to make haste, to which the monatti answered by imprecations.

Having entered the street, Renzo quickened his pace, endeavoring not to look at these incumbrances, more than was necessary to avoid them, when his wandering eyes were arrested upon an object of singular interest, exciting a compassion in him, which wrapt up his whole mind in contemplation of the spectacle; so that he stopped almost without thinking of doing so.

A lady came from the threshhold of one of the houses towards the convoy, whose aspect announced advanced youth, but which had not yet passed away; the beauty which she possessed was obscured, but not obliterated, by much distress and mortal langor; that sort of majestic, yet at the same time soft beauty, which is so conspicuous in the Lombard blood. She walked painfully but did not stagger, her eyes did not shed tears, but bore marks of having abundantly done so. There was in her grief something inexpressibly quiet and deep, which indicated a soul all imbued and filled with it. But it was not only her own appearance, which amongst so much misery, marked her especially for commiseration, and awakened in her favor, a feeling now deadened and worn out in all hearts: she bore in her arms a young girl of about nine years old, dead; but dressed, and laid out, with her hair divided in front, in a white frock of the greatest purity, as if her own hands had adorned her for a feast promised some time ago, as a reward for her goodness. She held her erect, seated upon one of her arms, with her breast upon the lady's breast, and she might have thought to have been alive, if it were not that her young white hand hung inanimately and heavily on one side, like wax work, and if her head had not laid upon the shoulder of her mother in an attitude of abandonment heavier than that of sleep. Of her mother! for if the resemblance between those two countenances had not proclaimed it, it could not but be announced by the distress which filled one of them.

And now a coarse monatti drew near to the lady, and made signs to relieve her from her load; but still with a kind of unusual respect, and involuntarily hesitation. But she, drawing back somewhat, in an attitude, however, showing neither scorn nor disdain, "no!" said she, "do not touch her now, I must lay her upon that car myself: take this." Saying this, she opened one of her hands, showed a purse and let it fall into that which the monatti held out. She then continued, "promise me not to take a thread from her, nor to permit others to attempt it, and to put her in the ground just as she is."

The monatti carried his hand to his breast, then with an obsequious kind of zeal, produced more by the new sentiment which had subdued him, than the unexpected gift, he busied himself with making room on the car for the little corpse. The lady, having kissed her forehead, placed her there as upon a bed, laid her straight, spread over her a white sheet, and said these last words, "adieu, Cecilia! rest in peace! This evening we shall see each other again, never to separate again. Meantime pray for us, and I will pray for thee, and for the others." Then turning again to the monatti, "you," she said, "when you pass by again at vespers, will come up and take me too, and not me alone."

Having said this, she re-entered the house, and an instant after appeared at the window, holding in her arms a still younger darling, alive, but with the marks of death on its face. She staid a moment in contemplation as it were of the unworthy obsequies of the first, until the car moved, and whilst it remained in sight, and then she disappeared. And what now remained for her to do, but to lay the only one which remained to her on the bed, place herself by her side, and die with her? just as the stately blossom upon its stem, falls with its floweret not yet escaped from the bud, when the scythe passes which levels all the plants of the meadow.

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed Renzo, "receive her prayers! take her to thyself, her and her little babe; they have suffered enough! they have suffered enough!"

Recovered somewhat from his emotions, and whilst he endeavored to recollect his course, whether at the first turn he had to go to the right or to the left, he heard another and a different kind of noise approaching, a confused sound of imperious cries, of feeble lamentations, of continued wailings, of female sobs, and children prattling.

He went on, with the accustomed sad and gloomy expectation in his heart. Arrived at the cross street, he perceived on one hand a confused crowd approaching, and stopped till it had passed. It was a train of sick persons going to the lazaretto; some driven by force, offering a vain resistance, vainly exclaiming that they would prefer to die on their own beds, and sending back impotent imprecations to the oaths and commands of the monatti who were conducting them. Others went in silence, without grief as it appeared, and without hope, as if they were senseless: women with their infants on their necks: children frightened by the cries, by the orders, by the company, more than by the confused idea of death, and loudly imploring their mothers to take them in their faithful arms, to their own homes. Ah! and perhaps the mother, whom they supposed they had left asleep on the bed, had thrown herself there, struck down by the disease, and senseless, to be taken by a car to the lazaretto, or to the ditch, if the car arrived later. Perhaps, oh misery, worthy of still more bitter tears! the mother occupied altogether with her own sufferings, was forgetful of every thing, even of her children, and had but one thought left, to die in peace. Still, amidst so much confusion, there were yet some examples of constancy and compassion: parents, brothers, sons, consorts, who sustained those who were dear to them, and who accompanied them with words of comfort; nor yet adults alone, young boys, and even young girls, who escorted their younger brothers, and with the wisdom and discretion of a more mature age, encouraged them to be obedient, and assured them that they were going to a place where others would take care of them and cure them.

In the midst of all the sadness and the compassion which these spectacles touched him with, a more powerful solicitude agitated more

nearly and kept in suspense our traveler.—The house could not be far off, and who could tell if amongst all those people. But the crowd having passed, and the doubt having ceased, he turned to a monatti who was coming behind, and asked him about the street and the house where Don Ferrante lived. "Find them out yourself, bumpkin," was the answer that he got. He made no reply, but seeing a few paces off, a commissary who brought up the rear of the convoy, and had somewhat of a christian look, he put the same question to him. The man, pointing with a stick to the quarter whence he came, said "the first street to the right, the last gentleman's house on the left."

With a new and still stronger beating at his heart, the youth dragged himself there. He is in the street, he soon perceives the house amongst the more humble and less commodious ones, he approaches the door which is shut, puts his hand to the knocker, holds it suspended, as if his hand was about drawing a lot upon which his life or death depended. At length he raised it, and gave it a resolute knock.

After a short moment a window was carefully opened, and a woman put her head partly out, and looked to the door with a dark face that seemed to say, monatti, I suppose? robbers? commissaries? anointers? devils?

"Signora," said Renzo, looking up, with an unsteady voice "is there a young country woman here at service called Lucia?"

"She is no longer here, go your ways," answered the woman, in the act of shutting the window.

"A moment, for charity's sake! She is no longer here? Where is she?

"At the lazaretto," and again she began to shut it.

"But one moment, for the love of Heaven! With the plague?"

"To be sure. Is that a new thing, eh? go about your business."

"Stay, tell me! Has she been sick a long time? How long is it—?"

The window now was shut in good earnest.

"Signora! signora! one word, for charity's sake! for the sake of your dead friends. I don't want to ask you any thing about your own affairs, Signora!" but it was like talking to the wall.

Afflicted at the news, and irritated at the treatment, Renzo seized the knocker again, and leaning against the door, was pulling and twisting it in his hand, then raised it in a desperate sort of way, and then hesitated awhile. In this agitation he looked round to see if he could espy some neighbor, from whom perhaps he could get some clear information, some direction, some light or other. But the first, the only person he perceived, was another woman, perhaps about twenty paces off, who, with a countenance expressive of terror, hatred, impatience, and malice, eyes that seemed to be fixed on him, and still looking at a greater distance, her mouth open as if she was going to scream, but still holding her breath, raising two skinny arms, stretching out and drawing back her wrinkled and hooked fingers, as if she was pulling something to herself, she gave manifest signs of wanting to call for help, and of a design to prevent somebody from perceiving it. When her eyes met his, she started as if surprised, and put on a still more furious look.

"Why, what the deuce—?" Renzo began, raising his hands likewise to the woman, but she having lost the opportunity of having him caught without his being aware of it, let go the cry that she had restrained until now, "an anointer! give it to him! give it to him! an anointer!" "Who? I! you lying old witch, hold your tongue," cried Renzo, and ran towards the place where she was, to intimidate her.—But he soon perceived he had better attend to his own affairs. At the woman's screams people ran from all sides, not such a crowd to be sure as in a similar case, would have got together three months before, but quite more than was necessary to drive one man away.—At the same moment the window was opened again, and the first woman who had acted so uncourteously, showed herself at full length, and screamed out also "catch him! catch him! no doubt he is one of those wicked fellows, that goes about anointing honest people's doors."

Renzo determined instantly that it was better to get clear of these people, rather than to stop and justify himself; and casting his eye round to see in what direction the fewest people were, he took the road that seemed the best. He pushed one of them out of the way that opposed him, and made another retire eight or ten paces with a blow in his breast from his fist, and away he ran, with his closed and knotty fist in the air ready for any one who should approach him. The street before him was empty, but behind him he heard still louder the bitter cries of "give it to him! give it to him! the anointer!" and heard the feet of the quickest of them drawing nigh. His anger was now converted into fury, his anguish became desperation: a veil rose before his eyes, he seized his knife, unsheathed it, stopped and collected himself, and turning round with an aspect more furious than he had ever put on in his life, and flourishing the shining blade in the air with his outstretched arm, cried out, "come on, you rascals, if you dare! I'll anoint you in good earnest with this."

But he was very much surprized and comforted when he saw his persecutors had stopped at some distance, as if they were hesitating, and still screaming, were holding up their hands and making sings as if they were alarmed, at some people in the distance who were behind him. Turning about, he saw before him at no great distance (his great agitation not having permitted him to see them before) a car that was approaching, indeed a train of the wonted funeral cars with their usual accompaniments, and beyond them another crowd of people that were wanting also to get the

anointer between the two parties, and so catch him, but they were prevented by the same impediment. Seeing himself between two fires, it occurred to him that that which was a cause of terror to them, might be the means of safety to him: thinking it was no time to make difficulties, he sheathed his knife, drew on one side and advanced to meet the cars, and passing the first, perceived there was sufficient space left in the second. He measured the distance, and sprang upon the car with his right foot, with his left in the air, and his arms stretched out.

"Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed the monatti altogether, some of whom were following the car on foot, some seated upon it, and others, to relate the horrible circumstance as it was, were seated upon the dead bodies, drinking from a large flask they were handing round. "Bravo! well done!" "Thou art come to put thyself under the protection of the monatti, thou art as safe as if thou wert in a church," said one of two who were seated on the car where he had leaped.

His enemies, as the train drew nigh, had for the greater part turned their backs, and were going away, still crying give it to him! give it to him! the anointer! A few of them retired more slowly, stopping now and then, and turning to grind their teeth and use menacing gestures at Renzo, who from the car answered them waving his fist in the air.

"Let me manage them," said a monatti to him, and tearing a dirty piece of rag from one of the corpses, and making a bundle of it, took hold of one of its ends, and made signs to throw it at them, as if it were a sling, calling out, "Stop, you rascals!" at that motion all of them ran off horror struck, and Renzo saw nothing more but the backs of his enemies, and their heels going up and down as lively as a fulling mill.

The monatti raised a cry of triumph, a loud burst of laughter, and a lengthened shout by way of accompaniment to their flight.

"Ah, ah! thou seest now whether we know how to protect honest men or not," said the monatti to Renzo, "one of us can frighten a hundred of those cowardly fellows."

"Certainly, I may say, that I owe you my life," answered he, "and I thank you with all my heart."

"Not at all, not at all," replied the monatti, thou deservest it, one can see thou art a good young fellow. Thou art quite right in anointing these rascals: anoint them, extirpate them, they are good for nothing at all except when they are dead: they curse us on account of the life we lead, and say, that as soon as the plague is over they will have us all hanged.—But they will all die before the plague does, and the monatti will be left alone to sing victory, and to enjoy themselves in Milan."

"Hurrah for the plague, and death to all the rascally crowd of fellows!" exclaimed another, and with this famous toast he put the flask to his mouth, and holding it with both his hands, amidst the jolting of the car, took a long draught, then handed it to Renzo, saying, "come drink to our success."

"I wish it with all my heart," said Renzo, "but I am not thirsty, I dont want to drink just at this moment."

"They made thee famously afraid, as it would seem," said the monatti, "thou hast the appearance of a poor man, the anointers have another sort of a look than thine."

"Every one gets on as well as he can," said the other.

"Give me the flask," said one of the monatti that walked by the side of the car, "I want to take another swig to the health of the owner, who is here in this fine company—there, there, exactly, it seems to me, in that famous coachful."

And with an atrocious grin, he pointed to the car that went before that where Renzo was. Then drawing up his face into a still graver air of scoundrelly mockery, he made a bow to the car, and said, "will you permit, my good sir, a poor monatti to taste this canteen of yours? See now, there must be somebody to do every thing; we are the men that have put him into his carriage, to take him to his country place—and since wine does not agree with your worship, why the poor monatti have got good stomachs."

Amidst the laughter of the company, he took the flask, and lifted it up, but before he drank, he turned to Renzo, and looking him in the face, said, with a sort of compassionate scorn, "the devil that thou hast made thy bargain with, is but a young hand, for if we had not been there to save thee, a pretty sort of help he was giving thee." And amidst a new burst of laughter, he put the flask to his lips. "And us? hollo there! and us?" those of the foremost car cried out. The rogue having quaffed as long as he pleased, delivered the large flask with both hands to some of his companions, who passed it till it came to one who, having finished the last drop, took it by the neck, and whirling it in the air once or twice, dashed it against the stones, calling out "long life to the plague!" He then broke out into one of their coarse songs, and immediately the others joined him in the atrocious chorus. The infernal strain being mingled with the sound of bells, the cracking of whips, and the trampling of horses, resounded through the desert silence of the streets, and filling the houses, made the hearts of the few persons who were still alive in them, shrink fearfully within them.

But what is there that is utterly bad at all times, and that may not be tolerated upon some occasion? The difficulty in which Renzo was placed a moment before, had made the society both of the dead and the living more than tolerable to him, and the noise which they made, was grateful music to his ears, as it relieved him from hearing the horrid conversation that was going on around him. Agonized and confused as he was, he thanked Providence in his heart, that he had been extricated from such a

moment, without injuring any one or being hurt himself, and prayed now that he might be delivered from his deliverers. He was on the alert, keeping his eye upon them and upon the street, to seize some moment to slip quietly down, without giving occasion to them to make any disturbance that might attract the attention of the passengers.

When at the turning of the corner, he seemed to recognize the place where he was passing; he looked attentively and knew it by certain objects. Where was he? Upon the corso of the oriental gate, in the very street where twenty months before he had entered so slowly and returned in such a hurry. He remembered directly that it was the road to the lazaretto, and the fact of being on the right road, without any effort of his own, and without any direction, he thought was an especial act of Providence, and that it augured well for the future. Just at that moment, a commissary came in front of the cars, calling out to the monatti to stop; they halted, and the music was changed into a clamorous conversation. One of the monatti who was upon the car with Renzo, had got down, and Renzo now said to the other, "I thank you for your kindness, God reward you for it," and got down on the other side.

"Go, go, my poor anointer," answered he, "thou art not the man that will depopulate Milan."

Fortunately, there was no one to hear him; the convoy had stopped on the left of the corso. Renzo hastily crossed over to the other side, and keeping close to the wall, went on towards the bridge, passed it, and following the well known borgo, recognized the convent of capuchins, and near the gate saw an angle of the lazaretto appear; he cleared the barrier, and then saw the exterior spectacle of the enclosure, which was scarcely a specimen of a vast, various, and indescribable scene

Along the two sides which present themselves to any spectator from that point, was an immense hubbub, a sort of afflux, an overflowing, a choaking of people: of the sick who were going in troops to the lazaretto, some sitting or lying down on the edge of the ditch that runs along the road, their strength having proved insufficient to take them inside of the asylum, or having left it in despair, they had been equally unable to advance any further. Others wandered about dispersed, like idiots, and not a few were quite deranged: here one would be earnestly engaged in relating his fancies to some poor creature that was laid prostrate, overcome with the disorder—another would be raging, and another laughing, as if he was assisting at some merry spectacle.—But the most extraordinary and clamorous part of this melancholy mirth, was a loud and continued singing which appeared to issue from that sorrowful assembly, and to be louder than all the other voices. It was a popular love song, gay and playful, one of those which are called country songs: and looking to discover who it was that could be merry at such a moment, he saw a poor wretch quietly seated in the bottom of the ditch that runs round the walls of the lazaretto, singing with all his might, with his face lifted up and his mouth wide open.

Renzo had scarce gone a few paces along the southern side of the edifice, than he heard an extraordinary rumor in the crowd, and a distant warning cry to take care. He stood on tiptoe to look before him, and saw a horse going at full gallop, urged on by a death-like looking rider: it was one of those frantic wretches, who perceiving the animal loose near a car, and no one guarding it, had jumped on its bare back, and striking it on the neck with his fists, and using his heels for spurs, was riding furiously forward, whilst the monatti behind were screaming out to him; a cloud of dust, which lengthened to a great distance, enveloped them as they went.

Thus confounded and tired out with misery, the youth reached the gate of the place, where more persons perhaps were crowded together than were to be found in all the space he had passed over. He went to the gate, entered beneath the arch, and remained for a moment immovable beneath the porch.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Let the reader imagine to himself the lazaretto peopled with sixteen thousand persons infected with the plague. The whole area filled with cabins and barracks, cars and people: those two interminable ranges of portico to the right and left, covered completely with the sick, and with carcasses prostrate on mattresses or on straw. And in every part of that immense den, a buzzing and an agitation like the breaking of the billows on the shore: inside of it, was a constant going and coming, a stopping, a running, a stooping down, a rising up, of convalescents, of crazy people, and of assistants. Such was the spectacle that at once presented itself to Renzo's eyes, and that kept him there oppressed, and unable to move.—We do not propose to describe this spectacle minutely, knowing that none of our readers would thank us for doing so, only, following our young friend in his painful examination, we will stop where he stops, and of that which he happens to see we will relate as much as is necessary to explain what he did, and what occurred to him.

From the gate where he first stopped, as far as the small temple in the centre, and from thence to the other gate opposite, there was a sort of empty lane without cabins or impediments of any kind, and at the second look, he perceived them very busy in removing cars and making it clear. He saw officers and capuchins directing the operation, and sending

those away who had nothing do to there. And fearing also lest he should be sent away in the same manner, he immediately got behind the cabins to the right, on the side where he had casually got.

He advanced, wherever there was sufficient room to place his feet, from cabin to cabin, putting his head in each of them, examining every one who was lying down, looking at the countenances of those who had sunk beneath their sufferings, contracted by spasms, or immovable in death, to see whether he could succeed in finding the one he dreaded even to discover. He went on for some distance and repeated over again his painful investigations, without having perceived one female, from which circumstance he concluded that they must be in some separate place. This was a conjecture, but he had no indication, nor could come to any conclusion where that place was. He met from time to time with persons ministering to the wants of the people, as different in appearance, in manners, and in dress, as the principles were opposed to each other, which animated both one and the other to live in the discharge of the duties they had to perform; in some of them there was an extinction of all sense of piety, in others it shone forth almost superhuman. But he put no questions to any of them, that he might create no difficulties in his way, and determined to go alone by himself, until he should meet with some females. And as he went, he never omitted to look around him, though every now and then he was obliged to withdraw, subdued and unnerved by such singular distress? But where could he turn his eyes, without meeting with distress?

The air and the sky increased, if any thing could increase, the horror of the sight. The fog had by degrees thickened and resolved itself into masses of clouds, which becoming darker and darker, gave things the appearance of a tempestuous and gloomy evening, if it were not that towards the centre of that dark and lowering sky, the disc of the sun appeared, as through a thick veil, pale, and spreading around it a feeble glimmering, and sent down a dead and heavy heat. Every now and then, amidst the vast surrounding hum, the rumbling of deep thunder was heard, broken and undetermined, nor when listening with attention was it possible to distinguish from what quarter it came, so that it might have been mistaken for a distant noise made by some cars which had stopped on a sudden. In the surrounding country, not a branch of a tree was seen to move, nor a bird to alight or to fly away; save the swallow, which darting rapidly from the roof of the enclosure, went gliding along with its wings spread out, as if to skim along the ground, but frightened by the confusion of the scene, shot up again quietly and disappeared. It was one of those moments, when amidst a whole company of travelers no one is heard to break silence,—when the hunter walks thoughtfully on looking to the ground, and the country maiden stops her song without being aware of it, whilst at her labor in the field.—One of those moments which are forerunners of the storm, in which, nature, immovable without, and agitated by an inward commotion, seems to oppress all animated things, and adds a weight to every thing: to idleness, and even to existence. But in that place, destined of itself to suffering and death, man already struggling with misery, was seen subdued by this new oppression; hundreds were seen to get worse rapidly, this last struggle was the most dreadful, whether in relation to the increase of suffering, or to the suffocating cries of the afflicted: perhaps this place had never known so bitter an hour before.

The youth had for some time wandered fruitlessly through this labyrinth of cabins, when, amidst the variety of lamentations, and in the confusion of the complainings, he began to distinguish a singular mixture of cries and bawlings, till he came to a rudely constructed partition, from within which this singular noise proceeded. He looked through a crack between two boards, and perceived it was an enclosure with cabins here and there within it, and in them, not such an infirmary as he had seen in the small encampment he had passed through, but infants laid upon small mattresses, or pillows, or bed clothes spread out, and nurses or other women occupied with them; but what arrested his attention more than anything else, was the goats which were there as assistants to the women—it was a hospital for innocents, such as the place and time afforded. It was something new to see some of these animals standing still over this and that infant to let them suck, and another running to the bleating of a little one, through maternal instinct, and stop at the little thing, and try to get in a good position, and cry out and fidget as if it was calling some one to help them both.

Here and there nurses were seated with babes at the breast, some of them so affectionately engaged, as to raise doubts in the spectator, whether they had been brought there by hopes of reward, or by that spontaneous charity which goes in search of suffering and misery. One of these, with a distressed countenance, took from her exhausted bosom a crying little creature, and went sadly to look for the animal that might serve in her place. Another tenderly regarding one who was asleep upon her breast, kissed it gently, and went to lie it down on a little bed in one of the cabins. But a third abandoning her bosom to the hungry little stranger, with an air, not of negligence but of abstraction, looked steadily up to Heaven. And what was she thinking of in that attitude and with that look, if not of her own darling, which perhaps a short time before, had drawn from that vital source, and which perhaps had expired upon it?

Other females, of a more advanced age, attended to other duties. This one ran to the cries of a hungry child, took it, carried it to a goat feeding upon a heap of fresh grass, and

presented it to its teats, coaxing and caressing with her voice the inexperienced animal, to lend itself to the act. Another ran to secure a goat, that was trampling upon a poor little thing, to go and suckle another. A third was walking her baby about, dandling it in her arms, trying to lull it to sleep with her song, or to quiet it with endearing words, calling it by some tender name she had given to it. At this moment, a capuchin came with a white beard, carrying two screaming little things, one in each arm, just taken from their exanimated mothers, and a woman ran to receive them, and looked amongst the nurses and goats, to see who should take the place of their mothers.

More than once the youth, pressed by his own anxiety, had removed his eye from the place to go away, and had put it back again, to look on another moment.

Having at length gone, he proceeded along the partition, till a parcel of cabins that were joined to it, obliged him to change his course. He followed the direction of the cabins, intending to regain the partition, to turn the corner and make new discoveries. Whilst he was looking before, to study the way, a sudden apparition, quick and instantaneous, struck his eyes, and threw him into disorder. At a distance of a hundred paces he saw a capuchin pass and disappear directly amongst the tents, a capuchin, that even at that distance, and passing so rapidly, had the complete walk, action, and figure of Father Christopher. With all the agitation that may be supposed, he ran to the place, and there he wandered, and sought, before, behind, within and without, in every possible direction, until to his great joy he saw the figure of the same friar again. He saw him at a short distance, going away from a large pot, with a porringer in his hand, towards one of the cabins: he then seated himself at the door, made the sign of the cross over the food that was before him, and looking around like a person always on the alert, began to eat. It was Father Christopher himself.

His story, from the moment we lost sight of him, until this moment, may be told in two words. He had never removed from Rimini, nor had thought of ever doing so, except when the plague broke out at Milan, and furnished him an occasion of ever doing what he had always wished to do, sacrificing his life for his fellow creatures. He entreated, with pressing instances, to be recalled, that he might serve and assist the infected. The count uncle was dead, and as to the rest, benevolent men like him were more wanted than politicians, so that his wish was granted without difficulty. He came immediately to Milan, entered the lazaretto, and had been there about three months.

But the consolation of Renzo at thus finding his good friar, was by no means perfect. At the same time he was certain it was him, he was painfully impressed with the great change that had taken place in him. His body was bent and he moved painfully, his face was meagre and worn, nature appeared to be exhausted in him, his flesh was wasted away, and it was evident that he sustained himself at every instant, by the force of his mind.

He too looked at the youth who was approaching him, and who by his gestures, not daring to speak to him, sought to recall himself to the recollection of the friar. "Oh, Father Christopher!" said he at last, when he was near enough to be heard without speaking loud.

"Art thou here?" said the friar, putting his porringer on the ground, and standing up.

"How are you, father? how are you?"

"Better than a great many poor wretches thou seest," replied the friar. His voice was faint, hollow, and changed like every thing else. His eye however was still the same, even it had a still brighter look, as if charity, sublimated at the end of its work, and exulting at the prospect of drawing near to its great source, had restored a fire there more ardent and still purer than that which infirmity was gradually extinguishing.

"But thou," he continued, "why art thou in this place? Why art thou thus come to face the plague?"

"I have recovered from it, Heaven be thanked. I am come—to look for—Lucia."

"Lucia, is Lucia here?"

"She is here, at least I hope in God she is here yet."

"Is she thy wife?

"Oh, dear father! no, she is not my wife Dont you know what has happened?"

"No, my son, since God sent me away from you, I have heard nothing whatever of you; but since he has sent thee to me, I speak the truth when I say I wish much to know what has happened. But—the proclamation against thee?"

"You know then what they have done to me?"

"But what hadst thou done?"

"Hear—if I should say that I had acted discreetly that day in Milan, I should tell a lie, but bad actions I have never committed."

"I believe thee, and I believed it from the first."

"Then, now I can tell you all."

"Stop," said the friar; and going a few paces from the cabin, he called out, "Father Vittore!" soon after, a young capuchin came, to whom he said, "have the kindness, father Vittore, to wait, for me, upon our creatures here, whilst I retire a short time, but if any one should want me, be good enough to call me. Especially the one you know! If ever he should give the slightest sign of consciousness, let me immediately be informed of it, for charity's sake."

The young friar answered that he would do so, and the old one turning to Renzo, said "let us enter here. But—" he added, "thou lookest fatigued, and wantest something to eat."

"It is true," said Renzo, "now that you, father, make me think of it, I remember I have not broken my fast."

"Stop," said the friar, and taking another porringer, he went to the large kettle to fill it, and then presented it with a spoon to Renzo: he then made him sit down upon a sack that served him for his bed, and went to a little cask that was in a corner, and brought a glass of wine, and placed it on a small table near his guest, he then took his own porringer, and sat down by him.

"Oh, Father Christopher!" said Renzo, "it does not belong to you to do these things, but you are always the same. I thank you with all my heart."

"Dont thank me," said the friar, it is the food of the poor, but thou art also one of the poor at this time. Now tell me what I am ignorant of, tell me about our poor girl, and try to do it in a few words, for time is precious, and there is enough to do, as thou seest."

Renzo, between the spoonsfull, went on with the story of Lucia, how she took refuge in the monastery of Monza, how she had been carried off—at the very idea of such sufferings and dangers, at the thought that it was he who had sent the poor innocent girl to that place, the good friar was scarce able to breathe, but he recovered himself when he heard how she had been miraculously delivered, restored to her mother, and placed by her under the care of Donna Prasede.

"Now, father, I will tell you about myself," pursued the narrator, and entered into a succinct relation of the famous day at Milan, his flight, how he had never returned home, and now, every thing being topsy turvy, he had determined to go there: how he had not found Agnes there, and that he had been told in Milan that Lucia was in the lazaretto. "And here I am," he concluded, "here I am looking for her, to see if she is alive, and if—she will still have me—because—sometimes—"

"But how hast thou set about it?" asked the friar, "hast thou any indication of the quarter where she has been put, or of the time when she came here?"

"None at all, dear father, I know nothing but that she is here; if indeed she is here, which God grant may be the case!"

"My poor lad! but what diligence hast thou used until now?"

I have gone up and down, but amongst other things, I have seen almost nothing but men. I have thought that the women must be in some place apart, but I have not been able to find it: if it is so, you can tell me father where it is."

"Dost thou not know my son, that men are prohibited from going there who have not some particular business there?"

"Well, what can prevent me?"

"The regulation is a proper and a holy one, my dear son, and if the quantity and weight of misfortune does not permit the rigorous observance of it, is that a reason for a respectable man to transgress it?"

"But, Father Christopher!" said Renzo, "Lucia was to have been my wife; you know how we have been separated, twenty months I have suffered and have been patient: here I am come at last through so many risks, one worse than another, and now—"

"I know not what to say," answered the friar, answering his own thoughts rather than the words of the youth: thy intentions are good, and would to God that all who have free access to that place, conducted themselves as well as I can believe thou wouldst do. God, who certainly blesses this persevering affection, this fidelity in loving and in seeking for her whom he gave to thee; God, however rigorous with men, is still more indulgent, and will not look at what may be irregular in thy mode of searching for her: only remember, that of thy conduct in that place, we shall both of us have to give an account, not perhaps to men, but to Him beyond all doubt. Come here;" saying this he rose, and with him Renzo, who kept listening to his words, and had determined with himself, not to speak as he had at first proposed, of Lucia's vow. If he hears of that too—he thought,—he will be making some more difficulties—either I shall find her, and then we can talk of it, or—and then! it will be of no use.

Having taken him to the opening of the cabin, which was to the north, the friar continued, "listen, our father Felice, who is the president here in the lazaretto, has this day, to conduct to another place, the few who have recovered, to pass their quarantine. Thou seest that church there in the middle—" and lifting his emaciated and trembling hand, pointed, in the turbid air, to the cupola on the left of the small temple, which was towering above the wretched tents, he continued, "they are now assembling there, to go in procession by the gate through which thou must have entered."

"Ah! this then is what they were trying to clear the way for?"

"Exactly, and thou must ave heard the bell ring."

"Once I did."

"That was the second, at the third they will all be assembled; father Felice will say a few words to them, and then will accompany them. When it rings, go there, and contrive to get behind the assembly upon the edge of the passage, where, without any trouble or without being perceived, thou mayst see them pass, and then look—and see—if she is there. If it is God's pleasure that thou shouldst not see her, that part," and raising his hand again, and pointing to that side of the building which was fronting them, "that part of the edifice, and a part of the space which thou seest before thee, is assigned to the women. Thou wilt see a palisade which separates this from that quarter, but broken and open, so that there is no difficulty in entering. When thou art within, if thou givest umbrage to no one, no one will probably say any thing to thee; if any one however seeks to prevent thee, tell him that Father Christopher of —— knows thee, and will be answerable for thee. Seek her there,

seek her with fidelity, and—with resignation: for, remember, it is a great thing thou art come to the lazaretto to ask for, a living person! Dost thou know how often I have seen this my poor people renewed here? How many carried away! how few go out alive! Go prepared to make a sacrifice—"

"I understand," said Renzo, interrupting him, his aspect changing, and his countenance darkening, "I understand. I will go, I will look, I will search, in one place, then in another, and then after all from the top to the bottom of the lazaretto—and, if I do not find her—!

"If thou dost not find her?" said the friar with a serious air, and with an admonishing look.

But Renzo, whose heart was full of anger, and whose feelings overcame his respect, repeated his words, and went on, "If I do not find her, I will contrive to find somebody else. Either in Milan or in his wicked palace, or at the end of the world, or to the devils own dwelling. I will find the scoundrel that has separated us, the villain, who if it was not for him, Lucia would have been mine, twenty months ago: and if we had been destined to die, at least we should have died together. If he is alive yet, I will find him—"

"Renzo," said the friar, seizing him by the arm, and looking at him with great severity.

"And if I do find him," continued he, blind with rage, "if the plague has not done him justice—these are no longer times when a coward, with his bravos around him, can drive people to despair, and then laugh at them: this is a time when one man can look another in the face, and—I will do justice to him myself!"

"Desperate youth!" cried Father Christopher, with his former full and sonorous voice, "desperate youth!" and his head, pendant on his breast, was raised up, his cheeks resumed their former color, and the fire of his eyes had something terrible in it; "see, rash young man," and whilst with one hand he seized and strongly shook the arm of Renzo, he waved the other before him, pointing as much as he could to the whole miserable scene around him, "see, who it is that chastises! He who judges, and is not judged! He, who scourges and forgives! But thou, worm of the earth, thou wilt do justice! Thou, thou knowest what justice is! Go, rash boy, begone! I had hoped—yes, I had hoped that before my death, God would have given me the consolation to know that my poor Lucia was alive, perhaps to see her, and to hear her promise, that she would put up a prayer towards the ditch where I shall be. Go, thou hast taken that hope from me. God has not left her upon the earth for thee, and thou, surely, hast not the audacity to believe thyself worthy that God should think of consoling thee. He will have thought of her, because she is of those souls for whom eternal consolations are reserved. Go, I have no more time to waste on thee."

Saying this, he flung the arm of Renzo from him, and moved towards a cabin of the sick. "Ah, father!" said Renzo, following him in a supplicating manner, "will you send me away in this manner?"

"How!" replied the capuchin with an equally severe tone, "would'st thou dare to pretend that I should rob these afflicted ones, of the precious time, they are waiting for me to speak of the pardon of God to them, to listen to thy intemperate words, thy threats of vengeance? I listened to thee when thou askedst for consolation and counsel, I left charity on one side, for charity's sake, but now that thou hast revenge at heart, what would'st have from me. Go! I have seen the injured die here pardoning those who had offended them; offenders, who groaned because they could not humiliate themselves before those they had injured, I have wept with them all, but what have I to do with thee?"

"Ah, I pardon him! I pardon him, truly; I pardon him for ever!" exclaimed the youth.

"Renzo! said the friar in a severe but more appeased manner; "reflect, and say how many times thou hast pardoned him?"

And remaining sometime without receiving any answer, all at once he drooped his head, and with his voice once more humbled, continued, "thou knowest why I bear this habit!"

Renzo hesitated.

"Thou knowest why!" continued the old man.

"I know," answered Renzo.

"I too have hated: I who have reproved thee for a thought, for a word: the man whom I hated, whom I hated cordially, whom I long hated, I slew."

"Yes, but he was an overbearing person, one of those who—"

"Silence!" interrupted the friar "dost thou believe, if there had been a good reason to give for it, that I should not have found it in thirty years? Ah! if I could only transfuse into thy heart the feeling that I have always had, and that I now have, for the man that I hated. If I only could! I? But God can; may he do it! Hear, Renzo, he intends thee a greater kindness than thou seekest at his hands; thou hast encouraged the thought of vengeance, but he has power enough and mercy enough to prevent thy executing it; he does thee a favor of which others have been unworthy. Thou knowest, thou hast said it often, that he can stay the hand of a tyrant, but know that he can also stay that of a vindictive man. And because thou art poor, and hast been injured, dost thou think he cannot protect against the vengeance of a man whom he has created in his own image? Dost thou believe that he would permit thee to do whatever thou wishest? No! but dost thou know what thou art able to do? Thou canst hate, and ruin thyself; thou canst with that feeling banish from thee every blessing: for however things may go, however fortune may lead thee, hold it for certain that every thing will be punishment, until thou hast pardoned, and pardoned in such a manner, that

it will never more be necessary for thee to say, "I pardon him!"

"Yes, yes," said Renzo with emotion, and quite confused, "I see that I never have pardoned him truly, I feel that I have spoken like a brute, and not like a christian, but now, with God's grace, yes, I pardon him with all my heart."

"And if thou couldest see him?"

"I would pray to the Lord to give me patience, and to touch his heart."

"Wilt thou remember that the Lord has not told us to pardon our enemies, but to love them? Wilt thou remember that he has loved man so far as to die for him?"

"Yes, with his aid?"

"Well, come and see him. Thou hast said "I will find him, thou shalt find him. Come and thou shalt behold against whom thou hast been able to preserve hatred, for whom thou couldst wish evil, desire to do it to, whose life thou wantedst to be master of."

And taking Renzo's hand, and holding it as if he had been a strong youth, he moved.—Without daring to ask any questions, he went with him.

After a short walk, the friar stopped at the opening of a cabin, he looked Renzo in the face with a mixture of gravity and tenderness, and drew him in.

The first thing that appeared on their entrance, was a sick person seated on the straw on the bottom of the cabin; sick but not excessively so, and who even appeared to be near convalescence; this man, on seeing the father, moved his head, as if meaning to say, no: the father stooped his own, in a sorrowful and resigned manner. In the meantime Renzo, directing his looks with an unquiet curiosity to other objects, saw three or four sick people: he perceived on one side, a person lying on a bed, covered with a sheet, and a nobleman's cloak laid over it, in the manner of a quilt; he looked at him, and recognizing Don Rodrigo, drew back; but the friar making him feel the strength of the hand which held him, took him to the feet of the prostrate invalid, and extending his other hand over him, pointed with his finger to Don Rodrigo. The unhappy man was motionless, his eyes were wide open, but without life: his face was wan, and spread over with black spots, his lips too were black and swollen. One would have said it was a corpse, if a violent contraction of the features had not shown how tenacious life was. His breast heaved now and then with a painful breathing, his right hand was drawn out of the cloak, he seemed to press his heart with it, with his fingers all crooked, which were livid and black at the extremities.

"Thou seest!" said the friar in a low and solemn tone, "It may be punishment, it may be mercy. The feeling thou now cherishest for this man, who has injured thee, will be like that which God, whom thou hast injured, will have for thee at the last moment. Bless him, and be blessed. He has been here four days, as thou seest, without giving any indication of feeling. Perhaps the Lord was about to grant him an hour of consciousness, but waited for thee to pray to Him for it; perhaps he wishes that thou and that innocent girl should pray to him; perhaps he reserves that act of grace for thy prayer alone, the prayer of an afflicted and resigned heart. Perhaps the salvation of this man and of thyself depends now upon thyself, upon that feeling of pardon, of compassion—of love!" He ceased, and joining his hands, inclined his face over them, as if to pray. Renzo did the same.

They were a few moments in that position, when they heard the bell ring the third time. They both moved as if in concert, and went out. They spoke not a word; their countenances spoke.

"Go now," resumed the friar, "go prepared to make a sacrifice, to praise God, whatever may be the result of thy researches. And whatever it may be, come and give me an account of it, that we may praise God together."

Here, without saying any thing more, they separated, one of them returned to whence they came, and the other went on to the temple, which was not further off than a stone's throw.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Who would ever, a few hours before, have told Renzo, that in the ardor of his research, at the beginning of the most doubtful moments, and the most decisive ones, his heart would have been divided between Lucia and Don Rodrigo? Still the thing was so. His figure mingled itself with all the precious and terrible images that hope and fear alternately placed before him in his enterprise. The words he heard at the foot of that bed, were balancing between the yes and the no that were strugling in his mind, and he could not conclude a prayer for the happy termination of the great trial, without uniting to it that which he had begun there, when the sound of the bell had interrupted it.

The octangular temple which rises, elevated from the soil by a few degrees, in the midst of the lazaretto, was, in its first construction, open on all sides, without any other support than pilasters and columns, a perfectly open building indeed. Every front presented an arch between two columns; inside there was a circular portico, which went round what was the church, composed only of eight arches, sustained by pilasters, answering to those fronts, and surmounted by a small cupola, so that the altar erected in the centre, could be seen from every window of the rooms of the enclosure, and almost from every point of the place. Now, the edifice being converted to an entirely dif-

ferent use, the spaces in the fronts are walled up, but the ancient architecture, having remained entire, indicates plainly enough the old state and intention of the building.

Renzo had scarce moved, when he saw father Felice appear in the portico of the temple, and go to the central arch, on the side fronting the city, before which the assembly was placed below, in the main passage, and immediately from his countenance he perceived that he had commenced his discourse.

He went round until he got behind the auditors as was suggested to him; and there remained perfectly quiet, examining the whole place, but perceived nothing but a great number of heads, as if, so to speak, the place was paved with them. In the centre, some of them were covered with handkerchiefs, or veils; there he fixed his eyes with great attention, but not succeeding in discovering any thing more, he turned then to where all were looking. He was touched and moved by the venerable figure of the speaker, and with as much attention as he could spare from the absorbing subject that engrossed him, he heard this part of the solemn discourse.

"Let us give a thought to the thousands and thousands who have gone from hence in that direction," and pointing with his finger behind his back, he indicated the gate that leads to the cemetery of San Gregorio, which at that time was one entire grave. "Let us cast a look around upon the thousands and thousands who remain here, too uncertain how they are to go away; let us look at ourselves, so few, who have recovered. Blessed be the Lord! blessed in justice, blessed in mercy! blessed in death, blessed in health! blessed in the choice he has been pleased to make of us! Oh! why has he chosen us, my children, if not to preserve a small people corrected by affliction and warmed by gratitude? if not to the end, that feeling now more lively that life is a gift from him, we may value it as a thing given to us by him, and that we may employ it in works that can be offered up to him? if not to the end that the remembrance of our sufferings may make us compassionate and charitable to our neighbors? May those, in the meantime, in whose company we have suffered, hoped, and feared so much, amongst whom we leave friends and relations, and who indeed are all our brethren, those amongst them who shall see us pass through the midst of them, whilst perhaps they may receive some relief from the thought that others go recovered from hence, may they be edified by our conduct. God forbid that they should perceive in us a clamorous joy, a carnal satisfaction at having escaped that death with which they are yet struggling. May they see that we go hence thanking God for ourselves, and praying to him for them, and be able to say,—even when they are away from here, they will remember and continue to pray for us poor creatures. Let us commence from this journey, from the very first steps we are about to take, a life all charity Let those who are restored to their ancient vigor lend a paternal arm to the weak—let the young support the aged; you who are left without children, look, see around ye, how many are left without parents! be such to them! and your charity, covering your sins, will soften your sorrows also."

Here a dull murmur of groans and sobs, which was increasing in the assembly, was at once suspended, when the preacher was seen to place a cord around his neck, and fall on his knees. In profound silence they listened to what he had still to say.

"For me," said he, "and for all my brethren, if, beyond any deserts of ours, we have been selected for the high privilege of serving Christ in you, humbly do I ask you pardon if we have not worthily filled our ministry. If sloth, if the indocility of the flesh, have made us less attentive to your necessities, less ready to your wants: if an unjust impatience, a culpable weariness, have sometimes led us to put on a severe or displeased countenance to you, if at any time the miserable thought that you stood in need of us, has led us to treat you without the humility that it became us to observe; if our weakness has drawn us into any act that has been offensive to you, pardon us! and so may God remit to you your trespasses, and bless you." Having made an ample sign of the holy cross to his audience, he rose.

We have been able to give, if not the precise words, a sketch and the sense at least of what he really did say; but the manner in which he delivered them, is a thing not to be described. It was the manner of a man, who called it a privilege to serve those infected with the plague, for he held it to be one, who confessed that he had not worthily corresponded to his duty, because he felt that he had not done so, who asked for pardon, because he was persuaded he stood in need of it. But they, who had seen the capuchins occupied entirely in their service, who had seen so many of them die, and he who was now speaking in the name of them all, always the first in fatigue, as in authority, except when he too was in a dying state, it may be supposed with what sobs and tears such a proposition was received.—The admirable friar then lifted a large cross which was against a pillar, raised it before him, left his sandals upon the exterior edge of the portico, descended the steps of the temple, and passed through the crowd, which reverently made room for him, to put himself at their head.

Renzo, as much affected as if he had been one of those of whom that singular pardon had been asked, drew further back, and placed himself on the side of one of the cabins, and there he remained waiting, half concealed, with his person behind and his head forwards, his eyes wide open and a strong palpitation at his heart: but with a particular sort of confidence, springing, I suppose, from the emotions which had been excited in him by the discourse, and the spectacle of such universal feeling.

And, lo, father Felice approaches, bare foot, with the cord about his neck, lifting up the long and heavy cross, his countenance meagre and wan, inspiring compunction and courage together. His steps were slow but firm, as if he was allowing for the weakness of others, and in all, he was as a man to whom those cares and too abundant troubles, lent the force to sustain himself in those inseparable from his charge. The oldest children came immediately after him, the greater part of them barefooted—few of them entirely clothed, some quite in their under garments. Then came the women, nearly all of them leading in their hand a little girl, and alternately singing the *miserere:* and the feeble sound of their voices, the paleness and langor of their countenances were things to fill with compassion the mind of any one who was there as a simple spectator.—But Renzo, looked, examined, from file to file, from face to face, without omitting one; for the slow movement of the procession gave him sufficient leisure to do so. They passed and passed, and he looked and looked, but it was all for nothing, he cast a look at those who remained behind, now in diminished numbers, there were but few files of them, the last came, all were passed, and he recognized none of them. With his arms hung down, and with his head leaning upon one of his shoulders, his eye followed the procession of females, whilst the line of men was passing before him, A new hope sprung up within him when he saw a few cars coming on in the rear, which bore the convalescents not able to walk. Then the women came last, and the train proceeded so slowly that Renzo could with the same ease look at these, without missing one of them. But what then? He examined the first car, the second, the third, and the rest, with the same result, to the very last, behind which came no body but another capuchin, with a serious aspect, and a staff in his hand as the regulator of the convoy. It was that father Michele whom we have said was appointed coadjutor in the government of the lazaretto with father Felice.

Thus fled all the sweet hope he had cherished, and not only carried away all the comfort he had felt, but as it frequently occurs, left him in a worse condition than at first. Now the next most fortunate contingencies was to find Lucia sick, and thus with increased apprehension added to his hope, he clung with all the power of his mind to that sad and weak thread, and directed his steps to the quarter whence the procession had come. When he reached the foot of the little temple, he knelt upon the last step, and there put up a prayer to God; or to speak plainer, a crowd of confused words, interrupted phrases, exclamations, instances, complaints, and promises; one of those addresses that are never made to men, who have not intelligence enough to comprehend them, nor patience enough to listen to them. Men are not great enough to feel compassion without its wearying them.

He rose, somewhat encouraged, went round the temple, and found himself in the other passage which he had not yet seen, and which led to the other gate: after going a short distance, he saw to the right and to the left the palisade of which the friar had spoken to him, but full of gaps and openings, exactly as he had told him; he entered one of them, and found himself in the quarter of the women.—He had scarce set foot into it, when he saw a little bell on the ground, one of those which the monatti wore on their feet, with its straps attached to it; it came into his head that this instrument might serve him as a sort of passport there, he picked it up, observed if any one was looking at him, and fixed it on his foot. And immediately he began his researches, which, on account of the multiplicity alone of objects, was extremely difficult, even if they had been less painful: he began to run over with his eye, and even to contemplate new scenes of wo, in some places similar to those he had seen, in others so dissimilar, that although the calamity was the same, it was a different kind of suffering, another kind of languishing, complaints of a different kind, an evil supported in a different way, another kind of pitying and of being assisted alternately; it was, to an observer, another kind of distress, and a different kind of apprehension.

He had proceeded, I know not how far, without any thing occurring, when he heard some one exclaim behind him, *oh!* apparently addressed to himself. He turned, and saw at a distance, a commissary, who raised his hands, making a sign to him, and calling out, "there in the rooms they want help, here they have scarce finished sweeping."

Renzo immediately perceived who he was taken for, and that the bell was the cause of the mistake: he called himself a fool for having thought only of the difficulties that badge might have enabled him to avoid, and not of those it might draw him into, but thought instantly of how he should disembarrass himself of it. He nodded with his head hastily, as much as to say he had heard and would obey, and withdrew from his sight, amongst the cabins.

When he conceived himself far enough off, he thought about taking the bell from his foot, and in order to do it without observation, he entered a narrow place betwixt two poor cabins, which stood with their backs to each other. Stooping to loosen the latches, with his head touching the straw back of one of the cabins, a voice struck his ear,—oh, heavens! is it possible? His whole soul went to his ear, his breathing was suspended.—Yes! yes! it is the same voice! "Afraid of whom?" said that sweet voice, "we have gone through something more than a storm. He who has protected us until now, will continue to protect us."

If Renzo did not cry out, it was not from fear of discovering himself, it was because his voice was gone. His knees failed him, a cloud came over his eyes; but this was on the first

instant, at the second, he was erect, wide awake, and more vigorous than ever: in three skips he was round the cabin, at the door, saw her who had spoken, and saw her bending over a small bed. She turned round at the noise, looked, thought it was a vision, that she was dreaming, looked more attentively, and cried out, "oh, blessed Lord!"

"Lucia! I have found you! I find you! it is you yourself! you are alive!" exclaimed Renzo, advancing, trembling all over.

"Oh, blessed Lord!" replied Lucia, trembling still more violently. "You? What is this? in what way? Why? The plague!"

"I have had it. And you—!"

"Ah, I have had it too. And my mother—?"

"I have not seen her, because she is at Pasturo, I believe however she is well. But you—how pale you are yet! how weak you seem! Cured though, are you cured?"

"The Lord has been pleased to leave me here still. Ah, Renzo! why are you here?"

"Why?" said Renzo, drawing still nearer to her. "Do you ask me why? What could I come here for? Is it necessary for me to tell you? Who have I to think of? Is not my name Renzo, eh? And is not yours Lucia?"

"Ah, what do you say? What are you talking of. But did not my mother get a letter written to you?"

"Yes, there was too much written to me. Pretty things to write to a poor unfortunate young man, full of tribulation, and wandering about; to a young man, at any rate that had never displeased you."

"But Renzo! Renzo! since you know—why did you come? Why?"

"Why did I come? Oh, Lucia, why did I come, do you ask me? After so many promises! Are not we ourselves? Dont you remember any more? What was there wanting."

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed Lucia sorrowfully, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to Heaven, "Why didst thou not do me the favor to take me to thyself—! Oh, Renzo? what is it you have done? See now, I was beginning to hope that—in time—thou wouldst have forgotten me—"

"A pretty hope indeed! pretty things to tell me to my face!"

"Ah, what have you done! and in this place! amidst so much misery! amidst so many spectacles! here, where people do nothing but die, you have been able—!"

"Those who die, we must pray to God for, and hope they will go to a good place; but it is not just, because that is so, that those who live are to go into desperation—"

"But Renzo! Renzo! you do not think of what you are saying. A vow to the Madonna!—A vow!"

"And I tell you such promises are good for nothing."

"Oh, Lord! what do you say? Where have you been, all this time? Who have you kept company with? How you talk?"

"I talk like a good christian, and I think better of the Madonna than you seem to do; for I dont think she wants any vows that are to injure others. If the Madonna had spoken, oh, then to be sure! But how has the thing been? Just an idea of your own. Do you know what you ought to have promised to the Madonna? You should have promised her that the first daughter we should have, you would call her Maria, this I am ready to promise her too. Such things do much more honor to the Madonna, that is a kind of devotion that is reasonable and hurts nobody."

"No, no, dont talk so; you dont know what you are talking about. You dont know what it is to make a vow, you have never been in that necessity, you have never experienced it. Leave me! leave me! for the love of Heaven."

And she turned away impetuously from him, towards the bed.

"Lucia," said he, without moving, "tell me at least, tell me, if it was not for this reason—would you be the same to me?"

"Oh, man, without any compassion!" answered Lucia, turning round, and restraining her tears with difficulty, "if you could make me say useless words, words that it would be wrong for me to say, words that perhaps would be sinful, would you be satisfied? Go; oh, go! forget me, we were not destined for each other! We shall meet in Heaven, we have not long to stay in this world. Go, have my mother informed that I have been cured, that even here God has aided me, that I have found a good soul, this good lady, who has been a mother to me: tell her that I hope she will be preserved from this evil, and that we shall see each other again, when God pleases, and as he pleases. Go, for the love of Heaven, and think of me no more, except when you pray to God."

And like one who has nothing to say, and will hear nothing more, who seeks to avoid a danger, she drew still nearer to the bed, on which laid the lady of whom she had spoken.

"Listen, Lucia, listen!" said Renzo, without however approaching her.

"No, no, go for charity's sake!"

"Listen, Father Christopher—!"

"How?"

"Is here."

"Here? Where? How do you know it?"

"I have spoken to him a short time ago. I have been some time with him, and a holy man of his quality, it seems to me—"

"He is here! to assist the poor sick certainly. But he? has he had the plague?"

"Ah, Lucia! I am afraid, I fear too much—" and whilst Renzo was endeavoring to utter what was so painful to him, and which would be equally so to Lucia, she had again left the bed, and had approached him, "I fear he has it upon him now!"

"Oh, poor holy man, but what do I call him poor man for? Poor we! How is he? is he in bed? is he assisted?"

"He goes about, and assists others; but if you was to see him, the face that he has, and how he totters! I have seen so many persons

with it, that unfortunately—one cannot mistake!"

"Oh! he is here!"

"Here, and a short way off, not farther than from your house to mine—if you remember—!"

"Oh, most holy virgin!"

"Well, a little farther. You may suppose if we have talked of you! He has told me things—and if you only knew what he has shown me! You shall hear. But first I will tell you what he said first to me, with his own mouth. He said I was in the right to come and seek for you here, and that the Lord is pleased that a young man should conduct himself so, and that he would help me to find you, as the fact has turned out to be. But indeed he is a saint! so that, you see!"

"But if he did talk so, it is because he does not know—"

"What would you have him know of the things you have done just out of your own head, without any rule, and without asking any one's advice? An excellent man, a man of judgment, like him, never supposes any thing of the kind. But what he showed to me!" And here he related the visit to the cabin. Lucia, although her senses and her mind had during her residence there been accustomed to the strongest impressions, was nevertheless filled with horror and compassion.

"And even there," continued Renzo, "he has spoken like a saint; he said that the Lord perhaps intended to be gracious to that poor creature—I cant give any other name now—that he waits until a favorable opportunity arises, but wishes us both to pray together for him—together! do you understand?"

"Yes, yes. We will pray for him; every where where the Lord keeps us, he can unite our prayers."

"But if I tell you his very words—!"

"But, Renzo, he does not know—"

"But dont you understand that when it is a saint that speaks, it is the Lord that makes him speak, and that he would not have talked that way, if it had not been right for him to do so? And the soul of that poor creature? I have prayed earnestly, and will pray for him. I have prayed with all my heart, just as if he had been my brother. But what do you think will become of him, the poor creature, if this matter is not settled here, if the evil he has done is not repaired? Now if you do what is right, then all will be as it was at first. What has been has been; he has had his punishment here—!"

"No, Renzo, no; God does not wish us to do wrong, that he may do an act of mercy: leave it to him this time. Our duty is to pray to him. If I had died that night, would not God have been able to pardon him afterwards? And as I did not die, and was delivered—"

"And your mother, that poor Agnes that always loved me so much, and was so anxious to see us husband and wife, has not she too told you it was a foolish notion? she, that at other times has set you right, for in certain cases she has a much better head than yourself—"

"My mother! Do you think my mother would advise me to break a vow! But, Renzo you are out of yourself."

"Oh, I'll show you how it is, the fact is you women know nothing about such things.—Father Christopher told me to return and tell him if I should find you. I shall go, let us hear him, whatever he says—"

"Yes, yes, go to that holy man, tell him that I pray for him, and that he must pray for me, that I am very, very much in want of his prayers! But for the love of Heaven, for your soul's sake, for my soul's sake, dont come back any more here to do me any ill, to—tempt me. Father Christopher, he will know how to explain things to you,and to bring you to yourself again. He will bring peace into your heart again."

"Peace into my heart! Oh! put that out of your head! You made them write me such stuff as that, and I know how much I suffered on that account, and now you have the heart to tell it to me to my face. And I tell you now, plainly and roundly, that I never will put peace into my heart. You want to forget me, and I dont want to forget you, and I tell you now, only just see, that if you drive me out of my senses I shall never get into them again.—My trade may go to the devil, and so may good behavior. You want me to go mad all the rest of my life, and I will go mad. And that poor man! God knows if I have not pardoned him in my heart, but you—do you want me then to think as long as I live that but for him?—Lucia you have told me to forget you, have told me to forget you! How am I to do it? Who do you suppose I was thinking about all this time?—And after so many things, after so many promises! What have I done to you since we parted? Do you treat me so, because I have suffered so much? because I have been unfortunate? because the people in the world have persecuted me? because I have passed such a long time from home, sad, and far from you? Why, the first moment when I could, am I come here to look for you?"

Lucia,when her tears permitted her to speak, exclaimed, whilst she clasped her hands, and raised her eyes to Heaven swimming in tears, "oh, most holy virgin, aid me! You know that since that night, I have never passed such a moment as this. Then you brought me succor, now help me likewise."

"Yes, Lucia, you do well to invoke the Madonna, but how can you think that she, who is so good, who is the mother of mercy, can have any pleasure in making us suffer—me at least—for just a word that you let out when you did not know what you was saying? Do you think she aided you then, just to create all this trouble afterwards? But if this was an excuse, if indeed I am become hateful to you,—tell me so—speak plainly."

"For charity's sake, Renzo, for charity, for the love of your poor dead, have done, have

done, and dont kill me. It would not be doing right. Go to father Christopher, recommend me to him, and dont come back here, dont come back."

"I'm going, but dont suppose I shall not come back, I should turn back if it was to the end of the world, to be sure I should turn back." And he went away.

Lucia went to seat herself, or rather she let herself sink on the ground near the bed, and placing her head on it, continued weeping.—The female, who to that moment had kept her eyes and ears open without uttering a word, now asked who that apparition was, and what all this debate and crying was about. But perhaps the reader desires to know who she was, and to satisfy him, we must say a few words.

She was a merchant's wife, in easy circumstances, about thirty years old. In the space of a few days she had witnessed in her own house the death of her husband and all her children: soon after, being seized with the disorder herself, she was taken to the lazaretto and placed in the cabin, at the time when Lucia,—after having overcome without being aware of it, the height of the complaint, and having changed, also without being aware of it, various companions,—was beginning to come to herself again, and to recover the consciousness she had lost from the first attack of the plague, whilst she was still at Don Ferrante's. The cabin had only room for two, and betwixt these two afflicted, abandoned, frightened females, left alone amidst such a multitude, an intimacy and an affection soon arose, such as a long ordinary acquaintance could scarcely have produced. Lucia soon found herself well enough to be serviceable to her companion, who had been excessively ill, and now that she had passed the danger, they became companions, and comforted and watched each other by turns; they had promised not to leave the lazaretto, until both could do so, and had indeed talked of never separating afterwards. The merchant's widow having left her in the custody of her brother, one of the commissaries of the tribunal of health, her house, together with the warehouse, and the money chest, all well furnished, found herself the sole and sorrowful mistress of more than she wanted to live comfortably with, and therefore was desirous of having Lucia with her as a daughter or sister, to which, it may be supposed she assented, grateful both to her and to Providence, but only until she could get intelligence of her mother, and could learn, as she hoped to do, what her pleasure was. As to the rest, with her usual reserve, she had never said a word, neither of her matrimonial engagement, nor of her other extraordinary adventures. But now, her affections having been greatly moved, she had as strong an inclination to give vent to her feelings, as the other had to listen to her; and pressing her right hand betwixt her own, she entered into a full explanation, without any interruption, save what arose from the sobs that accompanied her sad story. Renzo, in the meantime, proceeded in haste to the quarters of the good friar. With a little attention, and not without a few mistakes, he finally got there. He found the cabin, but he was not in it; searching and peeping around, however, he found him in a sort of tent, bent down almost with his face to the ground, comforting one who was dying. He stopped, and waited in silence. In a short time he saw him close the eyes of the sufferer, and place himself on his knees to pray a moment. He then rose, came forwards, and went towards Renzo.

"Oh!" said the friar, perceiving him, "well!"

"She is here! I have found her!"

"In what state?"

"Cured, or at least out of bed."

"The Lord be praised!"

"But—" said Renzo, when he was nigh enough to him to speak in an under tone—"there is another difficulty."

"What dost thou mean?"

"I mean that—your reverence knows very well what a good young woman she is, but sometimes she has got her own notions in her head. After so many promises, after all that you know, now she says that she cant be my wife, for she says—how can I tell? that in that night when she was so frightened, she got her head somehow warmed, and somehow or other devoted herself to the Madonna. A preposterous thing, isnt it so? All very well for those who know how to do it, and who have occasion to do it, but for us common people who dont know how to do such things, isnt it true that they are things that are not binding?"

"Is she very far from here?"

"Oh, no, a few steps beyond the church."

"Wait for me here a moment," said the friar, "and then we will go there together."

"Your reverence means that you will make her understand that—"

"I know not, my son, I must first hear what she has got to say."

"I comprehend," said Renzo, and stood with his eyes fixed on the ground, and his arms crossed on his breast, chewing the cud of the doubt he was condemned to remain in. The friar went again to look for father Vittore, requested him again to supply his place, entered his cabin, come out of it with his basket on his arm, and turning to Renzo, said, "let us go." Preceding the youth, he directed his steps to the cabin, where, some time before, they had entered together. This time, he left Renzo without, but entered himself, and after a moment appeared again, and said, "nothing! let us pray; let us pray."

Then continued, "show me the place."

Without further delay, they now proceeded.

The heavens were now beginning to grow darker and darker, and announced a certain and not far distant storm. Repeated lightnings flashed through the increased darkness, and gleamed with an instantaneous brightness upon the long stretched roofs, and the arches of the porticos, the cupola of the temple, and the

low tops of the cabins, and the thunder bursting forth with sudden explosions, went rolling on from one region of the sky to another. The young man went on before, marking the way, his mind agitated by unquiet expectation, forcing himself to slacken his pace, to accommodate it to that of his aged follower, who, worn out with fatigue, oppressed by his disorder, and by the atmosphere, got on painfully, raising from time to time his emaciated face to heaven, as if he was seeking a freer respiration.

"Renzo, as soon as he came in sight of the cabin, stopped, and turning, said with a trembling voice, "there she is!"

They enter—"Here they are!" exclaimed the female on the bed. Lucia turned, rose hastily, went up to the old man, and cried out, "Oh! what do I see? Oh! Father Christopher!"

"Well, Lucia? From how many troubles the Lord has delivered you! You must be well satisfied that you have always placed your hope in him."

"Oh, yes! But you, father? Poor me, how he is changed! How do you do? tell me, how do you feel?"

"As God pleases, and as through his grace, I wish to feel," answered the friar with a serene countenance. And taking her aside, he added, "listen to me, I can only remain here a few moments. Are you disposed to confide in me as you have always done?"

"Oh, are you not always my father?"

"What then, my daughter, is this vow that Renzo tells me of?"

"It is a vow I have made to the Madonna never to be married."

"But did you reflect at the time that you were bound by a promise?"

"I did not think of any promise, when the Lord and the Madonna were in the case."

"The Lord, my daughter, accepts of sacrifices and offerings, when they belong to us. It is the heart that he wishes, the free will; but you could not offer him the free will of another, to whom you were already bound."

"Have I done wrong?"

"No, my poor girl, do not think of that; I believe indeed that the holy virgin has been pleased with the intention of your afflicted heart, and has offered it up to God on your behalf. But, tell me, have you never taken counsel with any one on this matter?"

"I did not think there was any harm in it, and that I ought to confess it; and the little good one can do, we know there is no occasion to speak of it."

"Have you no other reason for refusing to fullfil the promise you gave to Renzo?

"As to that—I—what reason—? I cant say—that—any thing else," answered Lucia, with a hesitation that evinced any thing but uncertainty in her thoughts, whilst her face become so pale with her illness, was flushed all at once with a lively blush.

"Do you believe," answered the old man, lowering his face, "that God has given to his church, authority to remit and to confirm for wise purposes the obligations and engagements that men may have contracted with him?"

"Yes, indeed I believe it."

"Know then that we, who are deputed to the care of souls here, are endowed, in favor of all those who may require it of us, with ample faculties from the church; and, that consequently, I can, if you desire it of me, loosen you from the obligation of whatever nature it may be, that you may have contracted with your vow."

"But is it not a sin to take back, and to repent of a promise made to the Madonna? I made it then with all my heart—" said Lucia, violently agitated by the assault, of such an unexpected, we must say it, hope, and of being relieved from a terror, strengthened by all the thoughts that had for so long been the principal occupation of her mind.

"A sin, my daughter?" said the friar, "a sin to have recourse to the church, and ask of her minister to make use of the authority he has received from her, and that she has received from God? I have observed how you two have conducted yourselves with a view to be united, and certainly if ever a pair appeared to me to have been intended for each other by God, you are the very pair, and now I cannot see why God should separate you. And I bless him, that he has given me, unworthy as I am, the power to speak in his name, and to restore you to your promise. And if you ask me to declare you loosened from that vow, I shall not hesitate to do it, I desire even that you ask it of me."

"Then—! in that case—! I—ask it," said Lucia, with a countenance no longer disturbed but by modesty.

The friar with a sign beckoned the youth, who stood in the most distant corner of the place, looking (since he could do nothing else) with intense attention at a dialogue which interested him so much, and Renzo being come near, the friar said, with a distinct voice to Lucia, "by the authority I hold from the church, I declare you absolved from your vow of virginity, annulling whatever there was in it that was inconsiderate, and liberating you from every obligation you may have contracted by it."

The reader may imagine what effect these words produced upon the ears of Renzo. He thanked him who had uttered them in the warmest manner with his eyes, and immediately sought, but in vain, those of Lucia.

"Return with security and in peace to your first thoughts," the capuchin went on to say, "ask of the Lord again the grace you once asked of him, that you may be a holy wife, and confide in him, that he will grant it to you abundantly, after so many woes. And thou," said he, turning to Renzo, "remember, my son, that if the church restores this thy companion to thee, it is not to procure thee a temporal and worldly consolation, the which, if it could be complete and free from any mixture

of displeasure, would have to finish in sorrow, when you shall have to separate; but she does it to place you both in the path of that consolation which has no end. Love each other like companions on a journey, with the thought that you must one day separate, but with the hope of being re-united again for ever. Give thanks to Heaven that it has brought you to this state, not through turbulent and temporary rejoicing, but through pain and misery, that you may be disposed to a tranquil and enduring happiness. If God grants you children, see that you bring them up for him, instil into their hearts a love for him, and a love for men, and then you will guide them well through every thing. Lucia has he told you," pointing to Renzo, "who he has seen here?"

"Oh, father, he has told me."

"Pray for him. Be not tired of doing so. Pray too for me! My children, I wish you to preserve a remembrance of the poor friar." He now took from the basket a box of a common kind of wood, but turned and polished with a capuchin kind of neatness, and continued, "here, within, is the rest of that bread—the first that I asked for charity's sake, that bread of which you have heard speak! I leave it to you. Preserve it. Show it to your children! They will come into a sad world, in a sorrowful age, in the midst of haughty and oppressive men: tell them always to pardon, always! every thing, every thing! and tell them to pray for the poor friar."

He now delivered the box to Lucia, who received it reverently as if it had been a relic. Then with a more composed voice, he said, "now tell me, what friends have you here in Milan? Where do you think of going when you leave this place? Who will conduct you to your mother, whom may God have preserved in health?"

"This good lady will be meantime my mother, we shall go from here together, and then she will think of every thing."

"May God bless her," said the friar, coming near to the bed. "I thank you too," said the widow, "for the consolation you have given to these poor young creatures, although I had made up my mind never to separate from my dear Lucia. But I will take care of her in the meantime. I will go with her to her own country, and will deliver her to her mother, and "she added in a low tone, "I will furnish her with all her corredo.* I have too many things, and of those who should have shared them with me, I have not one left!"

"Thus," answered the friar, "you can make a sacrifice to the Lord, and do good to your neighbor. I need not recommend this maiden to you, I see she has become yours: let us praise God for it, who knows how to show he is our Father, even amidst his chastisement, and who, by bringing you together, has given so clear a mark of love to you both. "Now!" continued he, turning to Renzo, and taking him by the hand, "we two have nothing further to do here, we have indeed been too long here. Let us go."

"Oh, father!" said Lucia, "shall I see you again?" I am cured, and I am doing no good in this world, whilst you—"

"For a long time" answered the old man, in a serious and gentle tone, "I have asked a very great favor of the Lord, to end my days in the service of my fellow-creatures. If he will grant it to me now, I stand in need that all those who have any charity for me, should help me to thank him. Come, give Renzo your commissions to your mother."

"Tell her what you have seen," said Lucia to her betrothed lover, "that I have found here another mother, that I will come as soon as I can, and that I hope, I hope to find her well—"

"If you want money," said Renzo, "I have here all that you sent to me, and—"

"No, no," interrupted the widow, "I have a great deal more than I want."

"Let us go," replied the friar.

"Good bye, Lucia, until—! and you too, then, good lady," said Renzo, not finding words to signify all that he felt at such a moment.

"Who knows whether the lord will be so gracious as to let us all meet again!" exclaimed Lucia.

"May he always be with you, and bless you," said the friar to the two females, and left the cabin with Renzo."

"The evening was coming on, and the crisis of the weather seemed still more imminent. The capuchin once more offered the homeless young man, an asylum for the night in his poor cabin. "Company I can offer thee none," he added "but thou wilt be under covering."

Renzo however had a prodigious inclination upon him to go, caring nothing about remaining any longer in such a place as that, where he was not permitted to see Lucia any more, nor indeed had he the least disposition to stay with the good friar. As to the hour and the weather, it may be said that night and day, sun and rain, zephyr and storm, were all one and the same things to him at that moment. He returned therefore his thanks, saying that he wished to go back as soon as possible to look for Agnes.

When they were in the passage, the friar pressed his hand, and said, "if thou findest her, and may God grant it! salute the good Agnes in my name, and tell her, and all those who are left, and who remember brother Christopher, to pray for me. May God accompany thee; and bless thee for ever.

"Oh, dear father—! we shall see each other again? We shall see each other again?"

"In Heaven, I hope." With these words he went away from Renzo, who following him with his eyes until he disappeared, approached the gate in haste, throwing to the right and to the left, his last looks of compassion on the melancholy abode. There was an extraordinary movement going on, a driving of cars, mo-

* A bride's apparel.

natti running about, an adjustment of the tents, and a hurrying of the feeble to them and to the porticos, to shelter themselves from the cloud, that was covering the place.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

In fact, scarce had Renzo got free of the lazaretto, and on the road, (to the right, to get into the lane he came out of in the morning under the walls) when some heavy drops began to fall like hail, which striking upon the parched and whitened road, raised a minute dust: these soon became a thick rain, which, before he reached the lane, came down in buckets full. Far from being annoyed with it, it gave him great pleasure to be under it, enjoying himself in the refreshing element, amidst the pattering of the plants and leaves, waving about, and made green and bright by the precious shower. He drew a full and ample breath, and in this great transition of nature, felt, as it were, in a more free and lively manner, that which had taken place in his destiny.

But how much more pure and complete would that feeling have been, if he had been able to divine what was perceived a few days afterwards, that that rain thoroughly washed the contagion away, as it were; that from that moment the lazaretto, if it did not restore to the living all the living it contained, at least did not swallow up any more: that in a week all the houses and shops would be seen open again, and that people would have nothing left almost to talk about but quarantine, and that but few traces here and there would remain of the pestilence, such as every one leaves for some time.

Our traveler then pushed on with great alacrity, without thinking where or how, or when, or whether he should stop at all at night, anxious only to get on, to get home soon, to find some one to talk to, and above all things to be able to resume his journey to Pasturo, to search for Agnes. He went on with his mind quite busy with the incidents of the day; but amidst all the misery, the horrors, and the dangers he had witnessed, one thought was always predominant,—I have found her—she is cured—she is mine! Then he would make a spring, and the rain would fly from him, just as the water does from a dog that has got out of a river on the bank. Sometimes he contented himself with rubbing his hands well together, and then would push on with greater spirit than ever. Looking on the road, he collected, as it were, the thoughts he had left there that morning, or the day before, when he was going to Milan, and those especially with which he had then cheered his imagination, his doubts and difficulties, to find her, to find her alive, amongst so many dead or dying! And I have found her alive!—he concluded. He would then recur back to the moments of his severest trial, the most terrible and obscure periods of the day; he thought of the moment when he held the knocker in his hand,—I shall learn that she is here, or that she is not here! —and then to receive such a surly answer, and not have even time to digest it, before a pack of mad rascals to fall upon one; and that lazaretto, that ocean of misery! what a place to look for her in! And then to find her there! He thought of the moment when the procession of convalescents had passed, what a moment! what a heart-breaking sensation when she did not appear! and now he didnt care a fig about it all. And that quarter where the women were! And there behind that cabin, when least he was expecting it—that voice—that voice itself! And to see her, to see her standing right up before him! But then there was that knotty affair of the vow, and harder to undo than ever. That, too, was untied. And then his rage against Don Rodrigo, that cursed rancor that exacerbated all his misery and poisoned all his comfort, that was gone too. So that it would be difficult to imagine a more perfect state of satisfaction, if it was not for his uncertainty about Agnes, his sorrow for father Christopher, and his being still in the midst of a pestilence.

He arrived at Sesto when night was falling, and the rain gave no sign of stopping. But feeling himself in a better humor for walking than ever, and so much trouble about getting lodgings, and so completely soaked, he did not even think of stopping. He had one urgent feeling upon him, and that was a strong appetite, such good luck as he had had made him capable of digesting something better than the simple soup of the capuchin. He looked about for a baker's shop, and saw one; a couple of loaves were handed to him with the tongs and the other ceremonies. These he put in his pockets, and on he went.

When he passed through Monza, night had set in, nevertheless he contrived to make out his way and get into the right road, but from this point—and really it was an undertaking, it may be supposed in what state the road was, and how it was becoming every instant. Sunk, as they all were, (we have mentioned this in another place) betwixt two banks, like the bed of a river, it might have been called at that time, if not a river, at least quite a stream, and every now and then holes and puddles, not easy to get shoes from, and sometimes even the feet. But Renzo extricated himself as well as he could, without impatience, without bad words, without any regrets: reflecting that at every step, whatever it might cost him, he was getting on, that the rain would cease whenever it would please God, that day light would appear at its own time, and that the road he was now trampling through, would then be left behind.

Indeed, we may say, that he never even thought of these things but at the very worst

places. These were distractions. The great labor of his mind was going over the story of the melancholy months he had passed, so many difficulties, so many misfortunes, so many moments in which he was about to resign even hope, and give up every thing for lost, and then contrasting them in his imagination with a future of so different a character: the arrival of Lucia, his marriage, the establishment of his house, the relating of old adventures, and the rest of his life to come.

How he managed at the cross roads, for there were some, if his little experience of the country, and the feeble assistance he had from the light, were what enabled him always to keep the straight road, or if it was chance directed him, I am not able to say; he himself, who used to relate his story very minutely, not tediously, (and every thing induces us to believe that our anonymous writer had heard him relate it more than once) he himself, at this part of it, used to say, that he remembered the impressions of that night, just as if they had been created in a dream in bed. The fact is, that towards the end of the night, he found himself descending to the Adda.

It had never ceased raining, but at one period, what had been a deluge had become rain, and then a fine shower, equally and quietly falling. The thin and lofty clouds formed a continuous veil, but light and transparent, and the twilight now permitted Renzo to see the surrounding country. It was his native land, and it would be difficult to express what he felt at the sight of it. I can only say, that those mountains, that Resegone, near the territory of Lecco, had become, as it were, his own property. He cast an eye too upon himself, and thought he cut an odd figure, such, to tell the truth, judging from his own feelings, as he imagined he must appear to others; every thing utterly spoiled that he had on him, from the crown of his head to his girdle, a sort of walking sponge, a traveling gutter, and from his waist to the soles of his feet, a mass of mud and mire: if there were any places free of them, they were worthy of the less material names of dirt and drabble. If he could have seen himself in a glass, with the flaps of his hat all soft and hanging down, and his hair straightened out and pasted upon his face, he would have thought himself still more remarkable. As to fatigue, he might be fatigued, but he did not know it, and the freshness of the morning added to that of the night and the gentle bath he had taken, only made him more resolute, and increased his inclination to get on.

He reached Pescate, followed the last point of the Adda, gave a melancholy look at Pescarenico, passed the bridge, and through the lanes and fields reached the house of his pitiable friend. He, scarcely up, was standing at the door looking at the weather, and raised his eyes at the sight of such a mass of mud and dirt, looking so lively and happy; in all his days he had never seen a man look so battered and yet so content.

"What?" said he, "already here? and in this weather? What, have you discovered?"

"She is there," said Renzo, "she is there, she is there."

"Is she well?"

"She is cured, and that is better. I have to thank God and the Madonna that I am alive. Great things, things of fire—but I will tell thee every thing."

"But what a figure thou art!"

"I look well, eh?"

"To tell the truth, thou mightest use the water in the upper part of thy body, to wash off the mud in the lower part. But stop, I will make thee a good fire."

"I shall not object. Dost thou know where the rain took me? exactly at the gate of the lazaretto. But that's nothing, the weather knows its trade, and I know mine."

His friend went out and returned with some sticks under his arm, laid one of them on the ground, and the other on the hearth, then with some coals that remained from the evening before, he soon raised a good flame. Renzo, in the meantime, had taken his hat off, shaken it a few times and thrown it on the ground, and at last, but not with as much ease, succeeded in getting his doublet off. He then took his knife from the pocket of his trowsers, with the sheath as soft as if it had been steeped in water, put it on a small table, and said, "that fellow's wet enough too, but it's water! water!—God be praised for it. I have been within a hair's breadth—but I'll tell thee afterwards." And then he rubbed his hands.—"Now do me another favor," he added, "that little bundle I left up stairs, go and get it, for before those things are dry which I have on—!" His friend brought the bundle, and said, "I think thou must be hungry, I can understand there was plenty to drink for thee on the road, but as to eating—!"

"I contrived to buy a couple of loaves towards night, but—!"

"Leave it to me," said his friend, who having filled a pot with some water and hung it over the fire, added, "I am going to milk, when I return the water will be ready, and we shall have a good polenta. Get thyself ready at thy leisure."

Renzo, left alone, got, and not without trouble, the rest of his clothes off, which were almost glued to his body, dried himself, and dressed himself in fresh clothes from top to bottom. His friend returned, went to work upon the polenta, whilst Renzo took a seat waiting for his breakfast.

"I feel now that I am tired," said he, "I've had a pretty long walk! But that is a small matter. I have things to tell thee that will last the whole day. What a pretty state Milan is in! One ought to be there to see it! One ought to be there to feel it! Things to make one afraid of one's self. There wanted nothing short of the washing I've got! And what those fine fellows down there wanted to do to me! Thou shalt hear. But if thou wert to see the

lazaretto! A man may get lost amidst so much wretchedness. I'll tell thee all about it—and there she is, and she will come here, and she will be my wife; and thou shalt be one of the witnesses, and pestilence or no pestilence, we will be merry at least for a few hours."

As to the rest, he did what he had promised his friend, he kept narrating to him the whole day, especially as the rain continued to fall; they remained in the house, Renzo sometimes sitting near his friend, who occupied himself repairing some casks, and in preparation for the vintage, in which Renzo assisted him, for, as he was wont to say, he was one of those who get sooner tired of doing nothing, than of working. He could not resist however taking a run as far as Agnes's house, to take a look at a certain window, and to give his hands a rub there. He went and returned unobserved, and laid himself down to rest at an early hour. The following morning he was up betimes, and the rain having ceased, and the weather being fine again, he started for Pasturo.

It was still early when he reached it, being in quite as great a hurry as the reader can be. He inquired for Agnes, heard that she was well, and was in a small isolated house that was pointed out to him. There he went, and and called her by name from the street. On hearing that voice, she came to the window in a tremendous hurry, and whilst she stood there with her mouth wide open ready to ejaculate Heaven knows what, Renzo anticipated her by saying, "Lucia is cured, I saw her the day before yesterday: she salutes you, and will soon come. And then I've got, oh, what things I've got to tell you!"

Betwixt surprise at his appearance, joy at the news, and impatience to know more, Agnes began first an exclamation, then a question, without finishing any thing, and forgetting the precautions she had accustomed herself to observe for some time, said "I'll come down and open the door for you."

"Stop," said Renzo, "take care of the plague, you have not had it I believe."

"I, no; and you?"

"I have had it, and you must be prudent then. I am just come from Milan, and you shall hear, I've been in the contagion quite up to the eyes. Its true I've changed my clothes from top to bottom, but its a filthy thing that sometimes sticks like witchcraft. And since the lord has been pleased to preserve you till now, you must take care of yourself, until it is quite over, for you are our mother, and I want us to live together a while happily, on account of the great sufferings we have gone through, at least myself."

"But—" Agnes began.

"Oh!" said Renzo, interrupting her, "there's no more *buts* about it; I know what you was going to say; but you shall hear, you shall hear, there's no more *buts* in the business. Let us go to some open place, where can talk at our ease, without danger, and then you shall hear."

Agnes pointed to a garden there was behind the house, told him to enter it, and to sit down on one of two benches that were opposite to each other, and that she would come down stairs, and take a seat on the other. This was done, and I am certain that if the reader, informed as he is of what passed before, had been able to make a third, and could have witnessed such an animated conversation, could have heard all they said, the questions, the explanations, the exclamations, how they condoled each other, how they congratulated each other, and about Don Rodrigo, and Father Christopher, and all the rest, and those descriptions of the future, clear and positive as those of the past; I am certain, I say, that he would have been highly delighted, and would have been the last to come away. But to put it all upon paper, mute words made with ink, and without one new fact, I am of opinion he would not value it very much, and would prefer that we leave him to guess at it. The conclusion was that they were all to go and live together at Bergamo, in the country where Renzo had partly fixed himself. As to the period nothing could be decided about it, as it depended upon the contagion and other circumstances. As soon as the danger was over, Agnes was to return home to wait for Lucia, or Lucia was to wait for her: in the meantime Renzo was to walk frequently over to Pasturo to see his mother, and to keep her informed of every thing that was going on.

Before he went away, he offered her his money, saying, "I have got them all here, see, those crowns you sent, I had made a vow too never to touch them, until the whole thing was cleared up. Now, if you stand in need of them, bring a dish of vinegar and water here, and I'll throw the fifty crowns all handsome and shining, right into it."

"No, no," said Agnes. "I have enough left, more than I want for myself; keep your own together for yourself, they will do to begin to keep house with."

Renzo returned with the additional consolation of having found a person so dear to him quite well and in safety. The remainder of that day and the night he staid with his friend, and the next day he was on the road again, but in another direction—towards his adopted country.

There he found Bartolo, also in good health, and less afraid of loosing it, for in those few days, things even there had rapidly assumed another aspect. People were attacked much seldomer, the disorder was no longer what it used to be, it was without that mortal lividity, and violence in the symptoms; but slow fevers, intermittent for the greater part, with at the most some discolored spot, that was easily cured. Already the whole face of the country was changed, the survivors began to make their appearance, to form part of the population, and to exchange condolences and congratulations. They began to talk about going to work again, the surviving proprietors already were thinking about engaging workmen,

and in those branches principally where the number had been scarce even before the contagion, of which silk was one. Renzo, without affecting to be an idler, promised (saving however approbation from a proper quarter) to go to work again, as soon as he could return accompanied, to establish himself in the country. He gave directions meanwhile for the necessary preparations, provided himself with more roomy lodgings, a thing now too easily and cheaply procured, and furnished them with movables, putting his hand for this time to the treasure, but without making a great hole in it, for every thing was abundant and cheap.

After some days he returned to his native place, which he saw was remarkably changed for the better. Away he went to Pasturo, found Agnes quite full of confidence, and disposed to return home as soon as possible, so that he reconducted her there himself. We shall not relate what their feelings and expressions were at returning together to those familiar scenes. Agnes found every thing as she had left it, so that this time, she could say, as far as a poor widow and a poor young girl were interested, angels themselves had been on guard.

And the last time, she added, "whoever thought that the Lord was looking in another direction, and was not thinking of us, since he permitted our poor things to be taken away, has been greatly mistaken, for the Lord has sent me from another quarter some good crowns with which I have been able to replace every thing. I say every thing, and dont I say right? for there was Lucia's corredo that they carried away, all quite complete, with the rest of the things; that was wanting yet, when lo, and behold, even that is coming from another quarter. Who would have ventured to say to me, when I was so busy getting it ready, thou thinkest thou art working for Lucia, eh? poor woman! Thou art working for some one thou knowest nothing about; that linen, and those clothes, Heaven knows what sort of a creature's back they will get on! Those things for Lucia indeed! The corredo that will have to serve her, a good soul will think about, that thou art not acquainted with, one that thou dost not know even who she is."

The first care of Agnes was to prepare the most decent accommodation her poor cottage was susceptible for that good soul; she then went to look up some silk to wind, and thus with her reel she passed the tedious moments.

Renzo, on his part, did not pass the wearisome days in idleness; happily he had been instructed in two callings, and he now took to that of the countryman. He sometimes assisted his friend, for whom it was a piece of good luck to be aided at that season so efficiently; and sometimes he cultivated and restored to its ancient state the small garden of Agnes that had gone quite out of order during her absence. As to his own possession, he paid no attention whatever to it, saying that it was like a wig that had got too much tangled, and that it would take more than two arms to put it in order.—He did not even enter into it, not even into the house; it gave him pain to look at so much desolation; and he had already determined to part with it all, at any price, and to employ in his new country, whatever he might get for it.

If those who remained alive were like resuscitated persons to each other, he, to his countrymen, was in a manner doubly so. Every one welcomed and congratulated him, every one wanted to hear his story. Perhaps you will ask how he got over the proclamation against him. It went off very well, he scarce ever thought of it, supposing that those whose duty it would have been to attend to the execution of it, thought as little of it as himself, which was the fact; and this was occasioned not only by the plague, which had obliterated so many things, but, as may be seen in more than one part of this story, by the general course of things in those days, when ordinances both general and particular against individuals, if some private and potent animosity did not exist to keep them alive and give effect to them, frequently were inoperative, if nothing was done after the first moment; like musket balls, which, when they dont hurt any body, remain in the ground doing no injury to any one: a necessary consequence of the great facility with which ordinances of that kind were thrown out to the right and to the left. The activity of man is limited, and the superfluous energy in the ordinance, was usually compensated by an equal want of it in the execution. That which is sowed into the sleeves, cant be kept for patches.

Those who want to know how Renzo conducted himself with Don Abbondio, during this delay, are informed that they kept at a distance from each other; this last from apprehension lest some proposition should be made about matrimony, at the thought alone of which, there arose in his imagination Don Rodrigo on one side with his bravos, and the cardinal on the other with his arguments: the first because he had determined to say nothing about it until the moment had arrived, not disposed to run the risk of alarming him before hand, to create any new difficulty, and to embarrass the affair with unnecessary talking. It was with Agnes he used to converse about it. "Do you think she will come soon?" one of them asked, "I hope so," would be answered by the other; and frequently the very one who had given the answer, soon after put the same question. And with these and similar trifings they tried to pass the time, which appeared the longer in proportion to that which had passed.

We will enable the reader to get over the whole of it in a moment, briefly stating, that some days after Renzo's visit to the lazaretto, Lucia, with the good widow left it; for a general quarantine being ordered, they passed it together shut up in the widow's house. A portion of the time was spent in getting ready Lucia's corredo, who after a few modest difficulties, worked at it too herself: and the qua-

rantine being passed, the widow consigned the care of the magazine and the house to her brother, the commissary, and preparations were made for the journey. We can add also directly, that they left the city, arrived safe, as well as what followed; but with all the kind disposition we have to accommodate the reader in his impatience, there are three things belonging to that portion of time, we do not wish to pass over in silence, and two of them at least we believe the reader would reproach us if we were to do so.

The first, is, that when Lucia recounted her adventures again to the widow, in a more particular and detailed way than she had done in the agitation of her first confidence, and spoke more at large of the Signora who had given her an asylum in the monastery at Monza, she learnt things from her, which furnished a key to several mysterious matters, and filled her soul with a sad and fearful wonder. She learnt from the widow, that the wretched nun, being suspected of committing several very atrocious deeds, had been, by order of the cardinal, transported to a monastery at Milan, that there, after a great deal of furious resistance, she had become composed, and had accused herself: that her present existence was a voluntary penitence, of such a character, that no one, unless depriving her of it, could inflict any thing more severe upon her. Any one desirous of being more minutely acquainted with her story will find it in the work* we have before quoted, respecting that person.

The other is, that Lucia, making inquiries about father Christopher of all the capuchins she saw in the lazaretto, heard with greater grief than surprise, that he had died there of the plague.

And before she left Milan, she would have desired to know something of her old patrons, and do, as she said, an act of duty, if either of them remained. The widow accompanied her to the house, they learnt that both of them were gone where so many had preceded Donna Prasede; when it is added, that she was dead, nothing more requires to be said; but in relation to Don Ferrante, seeing that he was a learned man, the anonymous author has thought it right that the tribute should be paid to him, of enlarging a little on his score, and at our risk, we shall transcribe as near as may be what he has written.

He says, then, that when the plague was first begun to be talked about, Don Ferrante was one of the most resolute and always one of the most constant in denying its existence; not in a noisy and ignorant way like the people, but with reasonings, to which no one at least can say a concatenation was wanting.

"*In rerum natura*," said he, "there are but two kinds of things, substances and accidents, and if I can prove that contagion can be neither one nor the other, I shall have proved that it does not exist, that it is a chimera.—And here is my point. Substances are either spiritual or material. To say that contagion is a spiritual substance, is an absurdity no one will maintain, so that it is useless to talk about it. Material substances are either simple or compound. Now, a simple substance, contagion is not, and this can be demonstrated in four words. It is not an aerial substance, because, if it was, instead of passing from one body to another, it would fly off, in an instant to its own sphere. It is not an aqueous substance, because it would be humid, and would be dried up with the wind. It is not an ignious substance, for then it would burn. It is not an earthy substance, for then it would be visible. Neither can it be a compound substance, for under every view of it, it would be sensible to the eye or to the tact; and who is it has ever seen this contagion? Who has ever laid his finger on it? It remains to be seen if it can be an accident. Worse, and worse. These gentlemen, the doctors, tell us, that it is communicated from one body to another; this is their Achilles, their pretext for so many precautions without common sense.—Now, supposing it an accident, then it must be a transported accident, two words that are in opposition to each other, there being in the whole science of philosophy, no one thing more clear, or more transparent than this, that an accident cannot pass from one subject to another. For if, in order to avoid this Scylla, they are reduced to say, it is a produced accident, they fly from Scylla just to fall into Charybdis; for if it is produced, then it does not communicate itself, it does not propagate, as they go bauling about. These principles being settled, of what use is it to discuss these *vibici, esantemi*, carbuncles?

"All stuff and nonsense!" said signor such a one standing by.

"No, no," continued Don Ferrante, I dont say so, science is science, only it is necessary to know how to make use of it. All these things, together with parodital tumors, buboni violacei, furoncoli nigricanti, these are all very respectable terms which have their proper signification, but I say they have nothing to do with the question. Who denies that such things may be, or indeed that they actually exist. The whole matter is, what is the cause of them?"

And here began trouble for Don Ferrante too. As long as he confined himself to attacking the existence of contagion, he found none but docile, respectful, and benevolent listeners, for it is difficult to describe how great the authority of a learned man by profession is, when he only seeks to persuade others of the truth of things they are already persuaded about. But when he came to distinguish, and to attempt to demonstrate that the errors of those physicians did not consist so much in affirming that there was a terrible and general disease prevailing, as in assigning its causes, then, (I speak of the first moments, when the notion of disease was not listened to) then, instead of

* Ripam. Hist. Patr. Dec. v. lib. vi. cap. iii.

listeners he met with contumacious and intractable tongues, then there was no room for reasoning, and he could only get his own doctrines out by morsels and pieces.

"There you have the true cause," said he, "and they are compelled to admit it, even they who maintain that other opinion in the clouds—Let them deny, if they can, that fatal conjunction of Saturn with Jupiter. And when was it ever heard of that influences were propagated—? And these gentlemen, will they deny these influences to me? Well they deny there are any stars? or are they going to tell you that they are doing nothing at all there in the sky, and are playing the part of so many pin-heads stuck in a cushion? But what I cannot comprehend of these gentlemen doctors, is their admitting that we are under so malignant a conjunction, and then coming and telling us in such a bold way,—dont touch this, and dont touch that, and then you will be safe! As if by avoiding contact with terrestrial bodies, we could disarm the virtual effect of celestial ones! And then such a fuss about burning a pack of rags! poor creatures! You would burn Jupiter, would'nt you? Ay! and Saturn too, if you could!"

His fretus, that is to say, upon this foundation, he made use of no precaution whatever against the plague, was seized by it, and took to his bed. Thus did he go to his death, like one of Metastasio's heroes, laying it all to the account of the stars.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

One beautiful evening Agnes heard a carriage stop at the door—it is her beyond a doubt! It was herself with the good widow. The reader may imagine their mutual happiness. The following morning, Renzo came very early unconscious of what had occurred, and without any other motive but giving vent to his feelings with Agnes about the protracted absence of Lucia. What he did, and what he said when he so unexpectedly saw his mistress, the reader must also be indebted to his own imagination for. The behavior of Lucia to him, was such that it will not take many words to describe it. "I salute you, how do you do?" said she, with her eyes on the ground, and without discomposing herself. But Renzo did not take this sort of reception ill, he took the thing in its right sense, and as amongst educated people compliments pass for just so much as they are worth, so he comprehended very well what was to be understood by these words. As to the rest, it was very easy to perceive that she had two methods of making them understood, one for Renzo, and another for all those who were merely her acquaintances.

"I do very well when I see you," replied the youth, with a phrase worthy of being a model, but which he invented at the moment.

"Our poor father Christopher—!" said Lucia, "pray for his soul, although we may be quite sure he is now in Heaven praying for us."

"I thought it would be so, I was afraid of it," said Renzo. Nor was this the only chord that vibrated sorrowfully which they touched during this conversation. But, nevertheless, whatever was said, the conversation was a delicious one: like those capricious horses, which stamping their feet, first raising one and then the other, putting them exactly in the same place, and going through a thousand ceremonies before they take a single step, and then start off at once, as though they were borne by the winds; so had time become to him, at first the minutes appeared to be hours, now the hours appeared to be minutes.

The widow, not only was pleased with the conversation, but took her share in it, Renzo could never have supposed when he saw her on the bed, that she was of such a social and gay humor. But the lazaretto and the country, death and a marriage, are by no means one and the same thing. She had already struck up a little friendship with Agnes, and with Lucia it was a pleasure to see her, at once tender and playful, bringing her out gently and without forcing her, just enough to give a little life to her actions and words.

Renzo at length said he would go to Don Abbondio to take measures for the celebration of their marriage. Having found him, he said with a respectful sort of jocular air "Signor curate, has that headache of your reverences past away, that you said prevented your marrying us? The right time has come now, the bride has arrived, and I am come to know when it will be convenient to you, but this time I must entreat you to do it soon."

Don Abbondio by no means said he would not do it, but he began to hesitate, to make excuses and insinuations—what was he going to discover himself for, and have his name talked of with that proclamation hanging over his head? And couldn't the thing be done somewhere else, and this thing and that thing.

"I understand," said Renzo, "your reverence has got a little of that old headache yet. But hear, hear." He then described to him in what state he had seen poor Don Rodrigo, and that there was no doubt he must be dead now. "Let us hope," he concluded "that the Lord has show'd mercy to him."

"What has this got to do with it?' said Don Abbondio, "have I told you I would not marry you? I dont say no, not I! I speak, merely for good reasons. As to the rest, look you, as long as a man has got breath in his body—! Look at me: I am a broken vessel, I too have been nearer to the other world than to this, still here I am, and,—if nothing else comes to disturb me—enough—I too may hope to remain here a little longer. Just consider now how men of a certain temper—but as I said—what has this got to do with it?"

After some more conversation quite as in-

conclusive, Renzo scraped him one of his best bows, and returning to his friends, told them what had passed, and ended by saying, "I came away, for I was too full, and would not run the risk of losing my patience, and saying what was improper. At certain moments he was just the man he was before, and talked just in the same way; I am sure if it had lasted a little longer, he would have begun to talk latin to me again. I see he wants to make it a long business again, and it is better to do at once what he says, and go and be married where we mean to live."

"I'll tell you what we will do!" said the widow, "we women will go and make a trial, we'll see if we cant get hold of the right end of the skein. And then I shall have the pleasure too of knowing this man, and seeing if he is just as you say he is. We'll go after dinner, so as not to come back upon him quite so soon. Now, Signor Sposo, you must take us two a walk whilst Agnes is occupied; I will act as mamma to Lucia, and really I want to take a look at those mountains, and that lake of which I have heard so much; from the little I have seen of it it appears to me to be a remarkably beautiful thing."

Renzo conducted them at first to his friend's house, where they were joyfully received, and they made him promise, that not only that day, but every day, if he could, he would come and dine with them.

Having taken their walk, Renzo went immediately out, without saying where he was going. The women remained a while to talk a little, and concert the way to attack Don Abbondio, and at length the assault was given.

Here they come—said he to himself, but he received them well, was full of congratulations to Lucia, was civil to Agnes, and complimented the stranger. Having begged them to be seated, he entered upon the great topic, the plague, desired to know from Lucia how she had got through it; the mentioning of the lazaretto furnished an opportunity to let the widow who had been her companion, say a few words: then, as was natural, he began talking of his share of it, and then prodigious congratulations with Agnes who had escaped it. The visit was lasting rather long, and from the first moment the two eldest were on the look out, to put in a word at the very first chance, as to the essential point: at last one of them broke the ice; but what was to be done? Don Abbondio was quite deaf at that ear: he took care not to say no, but took to his tergiversations, and twistings, and talking nonsense again. "It would be necessary," he said, "first to get that horrid proclamation quashed; you, signora, who are from Milan, will be acquainted more or less with the thread of affairs, will have some good friends, will be acquainted with some cavalier of weight, that's the way to heal all wounds. And if they want to take the shortest way, without embarking themselves in so many things, since these young people, and our Agnes here intend to abandon their home, (I dont know what to say, home is where one is well off) it seems to me they had better do every thing there, where there is no proclamation to trouble themselves about. I dont exactly see the time when this connection may properly take place, but I should like to see it done well and peacefully. I speak the truth, with that proclamation still out, to pronounce at the altar that name of Lorenzo Tramaglino, I could not do with a quiet heart, I love them too much, I should be afraid to render them a bad service. Only see, signora, see yourselves.

Here Agnes began, and the widow began, to oppose his reasonings, and Don Abbondio to reproduce them under another form, it was a constant *da capo*. When in came Renzo, with a resolute step, and news in his face, saying, "The Signor Marquis *** is arrived."

"What does this mean? arrived where?"—asked Don Abbondio, rising from his chair.

"He has arrived in his palace, that once belonged to Don Rodrigo, for this Signor Marquis is his heir, so that there is no doubt about it. For me, I should be quite content if I knew that poor man died well. I have said a great many Paternosters for him, and now I will say some De profundis. And this Signor Marquis is a very good man." "Certainly," said Don Abbondio, "I have heard him called more than once a very excellent man, a man of the old stamp. But is it really true?"

"Will you believe the sacristan?"

"What for?"

"Because he has seen him with his own eyes. I have only been there in the neighborhood, and to tell the truth, I went there on purpose, thinking there was something to be heard there. And more than one and two have told me so. I afterwards met Ambrogio, who was coming from the castle, and who has seen him, as I say, acting as the master. Would your reverence like to speak to Ambrogio? I asked him to wait outside on purpose."

"Let us hear him," said Abbondio. Renzo went to call the sacristan, who confirmed the thing completely, added some other particulars, resolved all his doubts, and then went away.

"Ah! he is dead then! really gone!" exclaimed Don Abbondio. "You see, my children, how Providence ferrets certain people out at last. Do you know that this is a great affair! a great breathing for this poor country! for no body could live where he was. The pestilence has been a great scourge, and it has been a broom too; it has swept away certain subjects that we should never have freed ourselves from—green, fresh, full of life. One would have said that the man that was to bury them, was at school yet, getting his first latin words off by heart. And in the twinkling of an eye, they have disappeared, a hundred at a time. We shall see him no more going about with those cut-throats behind him, full of self-conceit, turning his nose up, as stiff as if he had a stake in his body, and looking at people,

as if they were all in the world just through his condescension. In the meantime, he has left it, and we remain behind. He will send no more of those messages of his to respectable people. He has given us all a great deal of vexation, do you see, that we can say at least."

"I have pardoned him from my heart," said Renzo.

"Thou hast done well, it was thy duty," replied Don Abbondio, "but we may thank God that we are delivered from him too.—Now, coming to our own affairs, I return to say, do whatever you like best. If you wish me to marry you, here I am; if it is more convenient in another place, please yourselves.—As to the proclamation, I see too, that now, there being no body to observe you and to do you any evil, it is not a matter to take a great deal of trouble about, especially since that gracious decree has appeared on account of the birth of the most serene infant. And then the plague! the plague! it has blotted out a great many things, that plague! So that, if you wish,—to day, is Thursday—Sunday, I will ask you in church; for what has been done heretofore, goes for nothing after so long a time has passed, and then I shall have the consolation to marry you myself."

"Your reverence knows we came on purpose for this," said Renzo.

"It is all right, and I will serve you, and I will immediately send word to his eminence."

"Who is his eminence?" asked Agnes.

"His eminence," answered Don Abbondio, "is our signor cardinal archbishop, whom God preserve."

"Oh, as to that, you must excuse me," replied Agnes, "for although I am a poor ignorant women, I can certify that that is not the way to call him, for when we went the second time to speak to him, as I am now talking to your reverence, one of those gentlemen the priests drew me on one side, and taught me how I ought to address myself to him, and that I should call him Vossignoria illustrissima and Monsignore."

"And now, if he should ever instruct you again, he will tell you that eminence is the proper title given to him, do you comprehend? For the pope, whom God preserve too, has prescribed, that since the month of June, this title be given to the cardinals. And do you know why he has come to this resolution?—Why, because the title of illustrissimo which belonged to them and to certain princes, you can see yourselves what sort of a thing that has become, and how many it is given to; and how willingly they all suck it down! Well now, what would you do? Take it away from all of them? There would be nothing but appeals, rancors, vexations, and spites, and the thing would go on as before into the bargain. The pope, therefore, has provided an excellent remedy. By degrees the bishops will begin to be called eminence, then the abbots will want it, and then the priests, for men are just made so, they always want to be pushing onwards: then the canons will want it.—"

"And the curates?" said the widow.

"No, no," answered Don Abbondio, "the curates have to go in the cart sills, dont you believe they will get any bad habits of that kind, they will have to be content with reverend to the end of the world. But I should not be surprised if the cavaliers, who are accustomed to hear themselves called illustrissimo, and to be treated like cardinals, should some day or other want to be eminences too. And if they do, you will see, that they will find plenty of people to call them so. And then, the pope, whoever he may be at that day, will have to find out something else for the cardinals. But, to get back to our own affairs; Sunday I will ask you in church, and in the meantime, what do you think I have imagined to render you service? In the meantime we will ask for a dispensation for the other two times. They have enough to do in Curia there below to grant dispensations, if they are required as much as they are from this quarter. For Sunday I have already—one—two—three—without counting you, and there may be others yet. And then afterwards, you will see, the fire has got into them, there will not be a single bachelor left in the country. It was a great piece of folly in Perpetua to die now, she would have found a purchaser in these times as well as the rest. And at Milan, signora, I suppose it is pretty much the same thing.

"Exactly: only imagine to yourself, in my parish alone, last Sunday, there were fifty marriages."

"Didnt I say so, the world is not going to end yet. And you, signora, has no fly begun to buz about you yet?

"No, no, I am not thinking that way, and do not mean to do so."

"Ay, ay, you want to be the only single woman in the world. Agnes, too, see there, Agnes too—"

"Pugh, your reverence wants to laugh," answered she.

"To be sure I want to laugh, and it seems to me it is high time. We have gone through some tough things, eh? Some tough things, my young people, we have gone through! The few days we have to remain here yet, it is to be hoped may not be quite so sad. But! happy you, if no misfortune happens to you, you have yet a long time to talk of past troubles! The poor old man—rascals may die, one may be cured of the plague, but there is no remedy for old age, and, as the saying is, *Senectus ipsa est morbus*."

"Your reverence may talk latin now," said Renzo, "as long as he likes, I care nothing about it."

"Oh! thou hast got a spite against latin yet, eh? Very well, very well, I'll suit thee. When thou comest before me with this young creature, just to hear a few short words said in latin, I'll say to thee, 'thou dost not like latin, so go in peace. Eh?'"

"Ah," said Renzo, "how do I know what I am saying, it is not such latin as that that frightens me: that is an honest, holy, latin, like that of the mass, and even the clergy are obliged there to read it out of the book. I speak of that rascally latin out of church, that does nothing but betray one in the middle of a conversation. For example, now that we are here, and all is settled, that latin that your reverence was spinning out to me in that corner there, to make me believe you could not, and that there were some other things to do first, and what do I know, will your reverence just turn it into the vulgar tongue for me?"

"Hold your tongue, you monkey, hold your tongue, dont stir these things up again; for if we were to make up our accounts, I dont know who would have to receive all the excuses. Let us say no more about it, but you played off some pretty tricks on me. I am not astonished at thee, thou art a sad dog enough, but I speak of this quiet piece of water, this young saint here, that it was a sort of sin to have any doubt about. But—I know—I know, where she got her schooling, I know, I know;" saying this he turned his finger that he was pointing to Lucia, to Agnes, and shook it. It would be difficult to describe the good nature and the pleasant manner in which he made them these reproofs. The news of Don Rodrigo's death had put him into a humor, and giving him such a fit of talking, as he had been unaccustomed to in a long time, and we should be still far from the end, if we were to relate the remainder of the conversation, which he prolonged, detaining the party when they were ready to go, and stopping them a minute or two at the doorway, always talking nonsense to them.

The succeeding day he received a visit as unexpected as it was pleasing. The Signor Marquis —— of whom we have spoken, a middle aged man, whose countenance was a guarantee to his good name, open, benevolent, placid, humble, dignified, and something that indicated a resigned sorrow.

"I come," said he, "to bring you the salutations of the cardinal archbishop."

"Oh, what condescension on the part of both!"

"When I took leave of that incomparable man, who honors me with his friendship, he spoke to me of two betrothed lovers of this parish, who have gone through a good deal of suffering on account of poor Don Rodrigo. Monsignor wishes to have some information about them. Are they alive? And are their affairs adjusted?"

"Every thing is adjusted indeed, I was going to write to his eminence; but now that I have the honor—"

"Are they in this place?"

"They are here, and as soon as it is possible, they are to be man and wife."

"I would request to be informed if I can do them any good, and that you would tell me how to do it. In this calamity I have lost my two only sons, and their mother, and have inherited three considerable properties. I had more than enough before, so that your reverence perceives, that by giving me an opportunity to employ some of my means, and especially upon this occasion, it will be truly rendering me a service."

"May Heaven bless your excellency! Why are they not all like you, the—? But, never mind, I thank you from my heart for these children of mine. And since Vossignoria illustrissimo gives me such encouragement, I have indeed an expedient to suggest, which perhaps you will not dislike. Know, then, that these good people are determined to go and establish themselves in another place, and to sell the little they possess here: the young man has a small vineyard of some nine or ten perches, more or less, but abandoned, and all grown up into weeds: there is absolutely nothing but the ground; he has a small house too, and there is another belonging to the bride, nothing but a couple of rats' nests now. A nobleman like your excellency can never know how it fares with poor people, when they are obliged to sell even their homes. The matter ends by the property falling into the hands of some avaricious rogue, who has had an eye upon their possessions for some time, and who, when he finds out they must sell, keeps aloof, and pretends indifference; then they have to run after him and give it away for a piece of bread, especially in such times as these. Your excellency sees where my story is going to end. The greatest piece of benevolence that Vossignora illustrissimo can do to them, is to extricate them from this difficulty, and purchase their little property. I, to speak the truth, find my own interest in the matter; my gain is, to have acquired in my parish such a patron as the Signor Marquis. But your excellency will decide as it may seem good to you, I have spoken merely to obey."

The marquis approved the suggestion very much, thanked Don Abbondio, and requested him to fix the price, and to make it a large one: he then completed the surprise of the curate, by proposing that they should go together to the house of the bride, where probably they would also find her lover.

On the way, Don Abbondio, quite delighted, as it may be supposed, thought of another matter, and said, "since Vossignoria illustrissima is so much disposed to be serviceable to this pair, there is another service you can render them. The young man has a rescript out against him, a sort of outlawry, for some extravagance he fell into in Milan, two years ago, the day of the great tumult, in which he found himself, without any bad intentions, and quite from ignorance, just like a mouse in a trap: there is nothing serious in the matter, your excellency; boy's tricks, nothing else: he is quite incapable of doing any thing bad, I can give my word for that, for I baptized him, and have seen him grow up: and then, if your excellency wishes to amuse himself, as noblemen sometimes do, by hearing these poor peo-

ple talk in their careless way, he can tell the story himself, and then your excellency can judge. Now, these being old affairs, no one troubles him, and as I have said, he talks of leaving the dutchy, but the time may come, when he may want to come back here, or something may happen, it is better, as your excellency knows, to be free of all such things. The Signor Marquis, counts, in Milan, as he ought of right to do, for the cavalier, and the great man that he is—No, no, let me say it, truth must find its place. A recommendation, a word from a man like your excellency, would be more than would be necessary to relieve him from this affair."

"There are no important things against him?"

"Oh, no, no; I believe nothing of the kind. They let out upon him at the very first moment, but now I believe it is a mere matter of formality."

"That being the case, it will be very easy, and I take it willingly upon myself."

"And then your excellency won't let me say you are a great man. I say it, and I will say it, in spite of you I will say it. And if I was to be silent, it would be of no use, for every body says so, and *vox populi vox dei.*"

They found the three women and Renzo there together. It may be imagined what astonishment they were in. I imagine even the naked and ragged walls, the tables and the furniture must have been astonished to find such an extraordinary guest amongst them. He gave animation to the conversation, talking of the cardinal and of other matters, with open cordiality, and with a just delicacy. In a short time he introduced the proposition that had been spoken of, and requested Don Abbondio to fix the price; who after a good deal of prologue and excuse, began saying it was not an affair of his own, and all he could do was to throw out a hint, he was only speaking in obedience to the wishes of the Marquis, to which every thing must be referred, and then, as he said, proposed something, in his opinion, quite preposterous. The purchaser said that on his part he was perfectly content, and, as if there had been an understanding about it, doubled the price, and would listen to no sort of modification, finishing the whole matter by inviting the company to dine at the palace, the day after the marriage, when the deeds should be signed.

Ah!—said said Don Abbondio to himself, when he got home—if the plague managed things always, and every where, in this way, it would be quite a sin to say any harm of it; we should be almost wanting one for every generation, and one might make a bargain about having a pestilence.

The dispensation came, and then the absolutary, and at last the blessed day itself came. The betrothed lovers went with perfect triumphant security to church, where Don Abbondio pronounced them man and wife. Another triumph, and a still more singular one, was their going to the palace the next day. It may be imagined what their thoughts were as they rose the ascent, and entered the gate, and what reflections they made, each one after their own fashion. It was remarked, in the midst of their mirth, that all of them said more than once, that to make the feast perfect, poor father Christopher was wanting. "But as to him," they added, "he is much better off than we are."

The Marquis received them very cordially, conducted them to a handsome dining room, and seated the married pair at table with Agnes and the widow, but before he retired with Don Abbondio to dine elsewhere, he was pleased to assist a little, and help his guests even at this first table. I hope it will not enter into any one's head, that it would have been better to have had but one table. I have said he was a very worthy man, but not that he was an original, as he would then have been. I have said that he was humble, but not that he was a prodigy of humility. He was sufficiently so to place him beneath those good people by helping them, but not enough to put himself on a level with them.

After the two dinners, the contract was produced by a doctor, who was not Azzecca-garbugli. He, I mean to say his remains, was and still are at Canterelli, and for those who dont come from that quarter, perhaps there will want an explanation here.

Perhaps about half a mile above Lecco, and almost on the flank of the country place called Castello, is a place named Canterelli, where two roads cross each other: on one side of these four corners is an eminence, like an artificial hill, with a cross on the top, which is nothing but a great heap of dead that perished during the contagion. Tradition, it is true, simply calls it, *the dead of the contagion*, but it is that beyond a doubt which was the last and the most deadly of which the remembrance is preserved. And learn that traditions, if they are not assisted a little, always leave something unexplained.

They met with no trouble on their return, if it was not that Renzo was somewhat incommoded by the weight of the money he had received; but, as you know well enough, he had triumphed over greater difficulties than this. I say nothing of the mental labor he had, which was not trifling, to think of his best method of employing them: to look at the projects that passed through his head, the contests he had with himself, the pros and cons, for and against agriculture and the silk spinning business, you would have thought that two academies of the past age had met. And the matter was infinitely more pressing and full of trouble to him, for, being only one man, he could not say to himself, "what occasion is there to choose? both one and the other, at the proper time, for the means in substance are the same, and they are two things, like the limbs, and two can go better than one."

Now, nothing else was thought of but packing up, and traveling; the Tramaglino family

for their new country, and the widow for Milan. Tears, thanks, promises to see each other again, were abundant. Not less tender, excepting the tears, was the parting of Renzo and his family from his pitiable friend; neither did matters go off coldly with Don Abbondio. The three poor people had always preserved a respectful attachment to their curate, and, at the bottom he had always been attached to them. It's the blessed business affairs of the world that set the affections wrong.

If any one should ask if there was no pain felt at this separation from their native country, from their mountains, the answer is, that there was, for I may venture to say there is a little pain belonging to every thing. It may be believed, however, that it was not very violent, since they might have spared it to themselves altogether, by remaining at home, now that the two great obstacles, Don Rodrigo and the outlawry, were removed. But for some time they had accustomed themselves to consider that their country to which they were going. Renzo had placed it in a favorable point of view to the women, by relating the advantages which operatives enjoyed, and a hundred things of the comfortable way in which people lived there. As to the rest, they all had passed some bitter moments in that upon which they were now going to turn their backs, and remembrances of a sad character, always end in the mind to the prejudice of the places they recall.—And when these are our native places, those remembrances perhaps contain something harsh and poignant. Even the infant, says the manuscript, reposes willingly upon the breast of the nurse, and seeks with avidity and confidence the source which has so sweetly alimented it until then; but if the nurse, to wean it, tinges it with something bitter, the infant draws back its lip, then tries again, but at length abandons it, in tears it is true, but it abandons it.

What will you say on hearing, that scarce arrived, and settled in their new country, Renzo found some new disgusts already prepared for him? Miseries to be sure, but a very small matter can disturb a state of happiness. The matter was briefly this:

The talking there had been about Lucia some time before she arrived, the general knowledge that Renzo had been very much distressed about her, and had always remained constant and faithful, perhaps too a word or two dropped from a friend partial to him and what was dear to him, had created some curiosity to see this young person, and a great expectation of her personal beauty. Now you know very well what expectation is, imaginative, deceptive, and confident; and afterwards when results appear, how difficult, and spiteful, never satisfied, because, in fact, it never knew what it wanted, and punishing itself without pity for the disappointment it had too flatteringly been the cause of. When Lucia appeared, many of those who had concluded her locks were made of pure gold, her cheeks of roses, and one of her eyes at least handsomer than the other, began to shrug up their shoulders, and turn up their noses, "Is this her?" said they, "faith, after waiting so long, and hearing so much said about her, one might have looked for something better! What is she after all? A country girl, just like all the rest. Why, there's as good as her and better all over the world. And then one began to remark one defect, and another another, and there were some who found her quite ugly.

But as no body told Renzo so to his face, there was no great harm done so far. They who did the evil, and widened the sore, were some persons who told him of it; and Renzo, what was to be done? was angry enough at them. He began to ruminate about it, and make a great stir, talking to some of them, and a great deal to himself.—And what is that to you? Who told you to expect so much?—Did I ever tell you so? did I ever say she was handsome? And when you talked to me about it, did I ever give you any other answer, than that she was a good young girl? She is a country girl! Did I ever tell you that I was going to bring you a princess here? You dont like her? very well, dont look at her! You have handsome women here, look at them.

And just see how a trifling matter sometimes decides the whole life of man. If Renzo had passed his whole life there, according to his first intention, he would have had very little comfort. From disliking the people, he at last came to be disliked himself. He behaved uncourteously to every body, because every one might be one of Lucia's critics.—He had a sort of sardonic way of doing every thing, finding something to criticise in every direction, so that if even the weather was bad two days running, he was sure to say, "what can you expect in this country?" He was now disliked by a great many of those, who, when he first came into the country, were his friends, and in time, what with one thing and another, he would have been almost in a state of hostility with the whole population, without perhaps his being able to assign the original cause, or find the root of so much bad feeling.

But it may be said the plague had taken upon itself to compensate all his vexations. It had carried off the proprietor of another filature situated almost at the gates of Bergamo; and the heir, a wild young fellow, finding nothing in the whole building to amuse himself with, had thought, and indeed was desirous of selling at half price, but he wanted the cash down, that he might immediately employ it in something not quite as productive. The matter having come to Bartolo's ears, he went to look at the place, and entered into a negociation. More advantageous terms it was impossible to hope for, but that condition of cash down spoiled every thing, for his capital, being made of small savings, was far from coming up to the necessary sum. Without, therefore, letting the bargain fall through, he returned hastily, communicated the affair to his cousin, and

proposed they should purchase in partnership. Such a good chance, brought all the economical deliberations of Renzo to a close, who instantly resolved to employ his capital in silk spinning, and assented. They now returned together, and the bargain was concluded. When the new proprietors took possession of their property, Lucia, who had created no anticipations, not only did not become exposed to criticisms, but was not disliked, and it came to Renzo's ears that several persons had said, "have you seen that handsome baggiana that's come?"—The adjective here carried the substantive through.

And even the disgust he had received in the other place, was a useful lesson to him in the mastering of his temper. Previous to that time he had indulged in a rash habit of giving his opinion about, and criticising other men's wives, and indeed every thing. Now he comprehended that words produce one effect in the mouth and another in the ears, and adopted the practice of weighing in future the import of his own, before he uttered them.

You must not imagine, however, that there was not some small fastidious matter here.—Man, (says our anonymous author, and you already know by experience that he had a rather strange taste in his similies, but you must bear with him a little, for this is likely to be the last) whilst he is in this world, is an invalid lying upon a bed more or less easy, and sees around him other beds, neatly and smoothly arranged, and he thinks they would all be very soft and easy. But if he succeeds in effecting a change, scarce has he got into the new one, and begun to press it, than he has a feather pricking him here, and feels a hard place there, in fact, it turns out to be pretty much the same thing over again. And for this reason, adds he, we ought to think more of doing well, than of being well, and then we should end by being better off. The figure has been nauled up with the capstan a little, and is a good specimen of the secentista style, but he is right at bottom. As to the rest, he continues: sorrows and troubles of the force and quality of those we have narrated, did not fall to the lot of our good people any more; from that moment life passed placidly with them, and was of the happiest, and most enviable kind, so much so, that if it was to be minutely related, it would annoy you to death.

Business went on very well; at the beginning there was some difficulty, on account of the scarcity of operatives, and the pretensions of the few who were left. Regulations were published limiting the price of manufactures, but in spite of this, these began to do well again, because in the end that must be the case.—Another order came from Venice somewhat more discreet, an exemption for ten years, from all taxes upon real and personal estate belonging to foreigners who came to dwell in the Venetian states. This was another cockaigne for our friends.

Before the first year of their marriage was completed, a beautiful little creature came into the world, and as if it had been done on purpose to give Renzo an opportunity to fullfil his magnificent promise, it was a girl, and you may suppose whether it was called Maria or not. In the course of time, Heaven knows how many more came, of both sexes, and there you might see Agnes carrying them about, one after the other, calling them bad little things, and giving them such smacks in their little cheeks, that she made large white places in them for some time afterwards. They were all very well disposed to be good, and Renzo was desirous they should all be taught to read and write, for since such roguery existed, he said, they might as well know how to take advantage of it.

But it was pleasant to hear him relate his adventures, for he always ended by speaking of the great things he had learnt to govern himself better for the future. "I have learnt," said he, "not to get into mobs, I have learnt not to preach to the people in the streets, I have learnt to drink no more than I want, I have learnt not to hold people's knockers in my hand, when there are hot-headed people about; I have learnt not to buckle little bells to my feet, before I thought what might grow out of it." And a hundred other things.

Lucia, though she did not find her husband's doctrine false, was not quite satisfied with it, it seemed to her, in a confused sort of way, that something was wanting. Hearing the old song repeated, and meditating about it, "I," said she, one day to her moralist, "what ought I to have learnt? I did not go to seek misfortune, it came of itself to seek me, unless you should say, added she, sweetly smiling, that my mistake that I made, was in liking you, and promising to marry you."

Renzo, at first, was puzzled. After some reflection and discussion together, they concluded that troubles will come to us, whatever may be the cause of them, and that the most cautious and innocent conduct does not secure us from them; but that when they do come, by our fault or not, faith in God will soften them and render them useful towards attaining a better life. This conclusion, although arrived at by poor people, has appeared to us so just, that we have determined to place it here, as the essence of the whole story.

The which, if it has given you any pleasure, you will feel kindly disposed to our anonymous author, and in a small degree to his editor.—But if, instead of that, we have annoyed you, be assured we have not done it on purpose.

THE END.

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